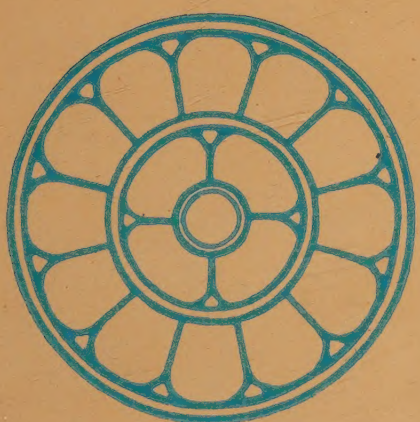
V. No. 1 February 1948

The ADVENT

A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future



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You can break moral rules only when you observe the divine Law.

The Mother

Open your heart and the Light will enter and dwell within it.

Sri Aurobindo

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The ADVENT

February 1948

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To be and to be fully is Nature's aim in us: but to be fully is to be wholly conscious of one's being. . . .

But also, to be fully is to have the intrinsic and integral force of one's being. . . .

Lastly, to be fully is to have the full delight of being.

But again, to be fully is to be universally. . . . All being is one and to be fully is to be all that is. . . .

But thus to be universally in the fullness and freedom of one's universality, one must be also transcendentally.

Sri Aurobindo—"The Life Divine"

A MESSAGE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

(In answer to a request from the All-India Radio, Trichinopoly)

I would have preferred silence in the face of these circumstances that surround us. For any words we can find fall flat amid such happenings. This much, however, I will say that the Light which led us to freedom, though not yet to unity, still burns and will burn on till it conquers. I believe firmly that a great and united future is the destiny of this nation and its peoples. The Power that brought us through so much struggle and suffering to freedom, will achieve also, through whatever strife or trouble, the aim which so poignantly occupied the thoughts of the fallen leader at the time of his tragic ending; as it brought us freedom, it will bring us unity. A free and united India will be there and the Mother will gather around her her sons and weld them into a single national strength in the life of a great and united people.

SRI AUROBINDO

5 February 1948

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The ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

MAN AND SUPERMAN

WHEN we speak of the superman we refer to a new race—almost a new species—that will appear on earth as the inevitable result of Nature's evolution. The new race will be developed out of the present humanity, there seems to be no doubt about that; it does not mean however that the whole of humanity will be so changed. As a matter of fact, humanity in general does not ask for such a catastrophic change in itself or for itself. But supermanhood does mean a very radical change: it means giving up altogether many and some very basic human qualities and attributes. It does not aim merely at a moral uplift, that is to say, a shedding of the bad qualities, what are considered, for example, as predominantly animal and brutish in man; it signifies also a shedding of some at least of the good qualities or what are considered as such. The superman is not a purified moralised man, even as he is not a magnified glorified animal man; he is man of a different type, qualitatively different. Let us take an analogy. What was the situation at the crisis when man was about to come out of (or be superimposed upon) an ape race? We can imagine a good part of that old race quite unwilling to go in for the new type that would appear to them queer, outlandish, even if not inferior on the whole or in some respects at least. They cannot envisage with equanimity the disappearance of many of their cherished characteristics and powers: the glory of the tail, for example, the infinite capacity to swing and jump, the strength to crack a nut with the sheer force of the jaws. And who knows whether they would not consider their intelligence sharper and more efficacious than the type

*Based upon talks with the Mother

of reason, dull and slow, displayed before them by man! They would lose much to gain little. That would most probably be the general verdict. Even so mankind, at the crucial parting of the ways, would very naturally look askance at the diminished value of many of its qualities and attributes in the new status to come. First of all, as it has been pointed out, the intellect and reasoning power will have to surrender and abdicate. The very power by which man has attained his present high status and maintains it in the world has to be sacrificed for something else called intuition or revelation whose value and efficacy are unknown and have to be rigorously tested. Anyhow, is not the known devil by far and large preferable to the unknown entity? And then the zest of life, peculiar to man, that works through contradictions—delight and suffering, victory and defeat, war and peace, doubt and knowledge, all the play of light and shade, the spirit of adventure, of combat and struggle and heroic effort, will have to go and give place to something peaceful and harmonious perhaps but monotonous, insipid, unprogressive. The very character of human life is its passion to battle through, even if it is not always "through". For it is often said that the end or goal does not matter, the goal is always something uncertain; it is the way, the means, the immediate action that is of supreme consequence: for it is that that tests man's manhood, gives him the value he may have. And above all, man is asked to give up the very thing which he has laboured to build up through millenniums of his terrestrial life, his individuality, his personality, for the demand is that he must lose his ego in order to attain the superhuman status.

So, the probability is that a large part of humanity will remain wedded to the normal human life. But this does not lessen in any way the value, the tremendous importance of what happens to the other part, maybe, not insignificant or inconsiderable. Along with those that doubt and deny, there will be those who believe and affirm, who will stand for divinisation, whatever dehumanisation it may signify.

Now, one may ask, what would be the relation between the two humanities —the human and the divine? And what would be the effect of the appearance of the new race upon the older stock? Here again we can take up the animal analogy. How has the advent of man affected the animal kingdom? It has affected to a certain extent, even to a considerable extent, one may venture to say. First of all, man has parked around him a fairly large group of animals, domesticated them, as it is termed, employing them in his service, using them for his purposes. Furthermore, he has gone out into the woods, the forests and mountains, ice-bound regions and deep seas, and there extended his sphere of influence, hunting and capturing animals that were so long free and unmolested, bringing about a change in the conditions of life even among wild animals. We do not say that the superman will

deal with man in the same way (although something of the kind may be found in the Nietzschean ideology). For man was a creature of Ignorance, and his behaviour and influence were naturally of the ignorant kind. The superman, however, being delivered of ignorance and living in perfect knowledge, has a different nature and outlook. He is one with the universe, with all its creatures; united with the Divine, he finds and realises his own self in each and every creature and thing: his character and conduct are the automatic expression of this sense of perfect identity. So he can do nothing that may seek to enslave or do real injury to mankind. On the contrary, his love and his knowledge, being one with the cosmic existence, will inevitably work for the progress and welfare of man too; indeed, his will be the perfect aid that even ordinary humanity can ask for and receive.

In spite of all the achievements he has had in the past, and in spite of the *cul-de-sac* or the blind alley into which he seems now to be stagnating, there is yet possibility enough for man to progress further, that is to say, even as a human being without taking the more audacious jump into supermanhood. The present miseries of human society, the maldistribution of the necessities of life, the ravages of illness and disease, the prevalence of ignorance, are not and need not after all be a permanent and irrevocable feature of human organisation. They can be remedied to a large extent, and society made more decent to live in, even though it may not be transfigured into the City of God. Man, without foregoing his present human nature, can yet be a more humane and humanistic creature, that is to say, more truly human and less animal and demoniac that he is trying to be. To this end the advent and the presence of the divine race will surely contribute in a large measure. The influence which the individuals of such a race will exert by the force of their luminous consciousness and the impact of their purified living, the sympathy and knowledge and comprehension which their very presence carries, will materially alter the nature and composition of the normal man and his society. There will emerge a sort of higher humanity—an intermediary between the present more or less animal, degraded humanity and the divine humanity of the future. The two humanities may very well live amicably together and be of help and service to each other.

We may mention here the other extreme possibility also. If, for example, the old humanity in a body rejects the New Man and will not allow him an inch of ground on the earth which it holds now as its fief and domain—as it may very well do—in view of the evidence that we have of the envy, jealousy, hatred, incomprehension moving normal men when they come in contact with men who do not follow their mode of life, who seem to pursue avocations that are meaningless and even perhaps injurious to them: if such is the case, then, we say, it would mean either the end of humanity, in the

same way as some species have become in fact extinct, or its reversion to a wild savage state, something like that (or perhaps worse) out of which it came.

Either you accept the Divine and allow yourself to be influenced and moulded by it; in that case you are in the line of progress and fulfilment. Or else if you stand against and come into clash with the Power that drives inevitably towards its high goal, then the result is, in the graphic words of the Bible:

"And whatsoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whatsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Matthew 22)

TRUE CHARITY

Charity is commonly understood to consist in rendering material help to your fellow man, giving alms to the poor, medicine to the sick, money or material to those who need them and physical service also where that is required. All this is well and good. The world is ridden with diseases and privations and calamities. And if something is done to alleviate them, it is as it should be, and activities in that direction deserve full encouragement. But this does not go far enough, does not touch the root of the matter. It is the human way of dealing with things and must naturally be very limited in its scope and efficacy. There is a higher, a diviner way—the way of the Spirit—for the cure of earthly ills, cure and not mere alleviation. That was the secret inspiration behind the message of the Christ and the Buddha.

It is not true that when one's wants are met, one always becomes or remains happy; all paupers are not unhappy, nor are the affluent invariably happy. Happiness is a quality that depends upon something else and comes from elsewhere: it is not directly proportional to material well-being. Unhappiness too is a psychological entity and consists in a special vibration of mind and vitality—and consequently of the physical being—due to a warp in the consciousness itself, in the core of the inner personality. The material conditions serve only to manifest it, maintain or aggravate it, but do not create it—truly they are created by it. That is why the spiritual healers always refer to the bliss of the Spirit as the sole remedy for physical ills even, for disease, misery and death. And the unhappy mortals are always called to turn to the Divine alone in their distress—*bhajasva mām*.

True charity consists in laying the healing balm upon the sore that lies hidden behind all external miseries which derive from that source and sustainer. And it is in the sole possession of him alone who has found

the bliss of the Spirit and dwells in it always. Such a person does not require external accessories for his work of healing and comforting. He need do nothing apparently; he may even appear to be aloof and indifferent. But his presence itself is a healing power: the patient feels it and wonders at the ease and happiness that come into him as if from nowhere. Many physicians have this kind of healing power; indeed without that, a mere medical man, with his pharmacopoeia, is no physician. It may not be well known and recognised, but it is a fact that a good part of the efficacy of medicines lies in the subtle influence, the vital health, that the doctor puts into his medicine or even directly into the body of his patient. And in the case of a spiritual *Bhishak*, the power can be raised to the *n*th degree. The healer need not even be present at all physically near the patient; his influence can act very well from any distance. It is quite natural and inevitable that it should be so. For the healing power is in the spiritual consciousness, the inalienable bliss of one's status in the Spirit. One becomes identified with each and every object—person or thing—in one's own self, in the true being and substance: and the light and happiness that one possesses there inalienably goes out in a spontaneous flow to others who are not really others but integral parts and portions of the same self.

This condition is attained, fully and sovereignly, when there is absolute egolessness, when there is no consciousness of a separate person, the dual consciousness of the helper and the helped, the reformer and the reformed, the doctor and the patient. The normal human sense of values is based upon such a division, upon egohood, *mamatvam*. A philanthropic man helps others through a sense of sympathy giving rise to a sense of duty and obligation. This feeling of pity or commiseration is dangerous, for it puts you in a frame of mind that tends to make you look down upon, take a superior air towards your object of pity. You become self-conscious, with the consciousness of your inferior self, that you are helping others, doing good to the world, doing something that raises your value: this sense of personal merit is only another name for vanity. Vanity and ambition are the motive power that lie behind the philanthropical spirit born of sympathy. To denote a shade of meaning different from what is usually conveyed by the word "sympathy", modern psychology has found another word—"empathy". Sympathy may be said to be the relation or contact between two egos; it is a link or bridge between two separate and independent entities; empathy, on the other hand, means the entering into the very being and consciousness of another, becoming that other one; it is identification and identity. This again is what spiritual consciousness alone can do. Sympathy leads to philanthropy, empathy is the origin of true charity, the spiritual compassion of a Buddha or a Christ. Philanthropy is human, charity (*caritas*) is divine.

VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

There have been religions, approaches to the Divine, which did not believe in the divinity of man, the Chaldean line, the Semitic, for example. According to these, the Creator and the Created are separate in nature and being; to call anything created as God himself is blasphemy. The ancient Egyptian, the Hebrew or the Muslim place God high in Paradise, and, in their view, man can be only his servant or slave, his worker or warrior. Man is too small and too earthly to be ever identified with God: he can only be a worshipper. Man can love God, at the most, as his Beloved. But this devotion is for something afar, like the desire of the moth for the star. And to equate the two is to confuse realities. Man as worshipper and devotee can attain certain divine qualities, but limited and modified and always humanised to a large extent. And God can never become man. He sends down his representative, his vicar, prophet or apostle who acts for him and in and through whom He acts, but He himself does not come down and put on the form of flesh. The universe is God's handiwork and testifies to his miracle and glory; but the universe is not God. Between the watch and the watch-maker there is always a hiatus and an incommensurability.

But can we say, 'I am born of God, and yet I am not God'? So the Indian boldly declares, all this is the supreme Divine, there is nothing else than the Divine—*sarvam khalvidam brhama*—I am He, Thou art That, or again, that which is in me and the conscious being which is there in the Sun are one and the same thing. God has created man and the world, He is in man and in the world, He has become and is man and the world. Not only so. Not only does God become the clod of earth by reducing his potential—to zero, so to say; but He descends often enough in his own being and consciousness here below, assuming a human form for a special work and a special purpose. This is the Indian conception of Avatarhood.

The Christian conception seems to occupy an intermediary position, being a sort of connecting link between the two. Christ is not only the Son of God, he is also the God-Man—he declares very clearly and categorically that he and the Father in heaven are one and that everyone should be as perfect as God himself. Still a difference is maintained. First of all, with regard to the birth. The God-Man was not born in sin like ordinary mortals, an immaculate virgin gave him birth. And with regard to the union or identity of Father and Son, the fusion is not absolute. Man is asked to be as pure and perfect as God, but only in kind and not in being and substance. The purified and perfect souls sit by the side of God in heaven, they do not lose themselves in God. The Vaishnava conception in India was in the same line. The liberated soul, according to it, dwells

with God in the same world, possesses God's qualities—the union is that of Salokya and Sadharmya—but it does not become one and indivisible with God (Sayujya).

The Sufi doctrine also occupies an intermediate position, like the Christian, between the Chaldean and the Vedantic. The absolute identity of the human lover and the Divine Beloved, a complete fusion of the two at a particular stage or moment of consciousness is one of the cardinal experiences in the Sufi discipline. But that is an innermost state, not normal or habitual in life and activity, where the difference, the separation between the adorer and the adored is maintained exactly for the delight of play. But the dualism in the Indian discipline is more than compensated by the doctrine of Incarnation which obliterates fundamentally all difference between the human and the Divine. According to it, God does not become man only once, as in the Christian view, but that it is one of his constant functions. Indeed, the Indian tradition is that He is always the leader of terrestrial evolution; at each crisis, at each moment of need for guidance, He comes down in flesh and blood, in the form of an earthly creature to show the way, how to live and move and act.

The special gift of the Chaldean line of discipline lay in another direction. It cultivated not so much the higher lines of spiritual realisation but was occupied with what may be called the mid regions, the occult world. This material universe is not moved by the physical, vital or mental forces that are apparent and demonstratable, but by other secret and subtle forces; in fact, these are the motive forces, the real agents that work out and initiate movements in Nature, while the apparent ones are only the external forms and even masks. This occultism was also practised very largely in ancient Egypt from where the Greek took up a few threads. The Mysteries —Orphic and Eleusinian—cultivated the tradition within a restricted circle and in a very esoteric manner. The tradition continued into the Christian Church also and an inner group formed in its heart that practised and kept alive something of this ancient science. The external tenets and dogmas of the Church did not admit or tolerate it which was considered as black magic, the Devil's Science. The evident reason was that if one pursued this line of occultism and tasted of the power it gave, one might very likely deviate from the straight and narrow path leading to the Spirit and spiritual salvation. In India too the *siddhis* or occult powers were always shunned by the truly spiritual, although sought by the many who take to the spiritual life—often with disastrous results. In Christianity, side by side with the major saints, there was always a group or a line of practicants that followed the occult system, although outwardly observing the official creed. It is curious to note that often where the original text of the Bible speaks of *gods*, in the plural, referring to the deities or occult powers, the official

version translates it as God, to give the necessary theistic value and atmosphere.

But if occultism is to be feared because of its wrong use and potential danger, spirituality too should then be placed on the same footing. All good things in the world have their deformation and danger, but that is no reason why one should avoid them altogether. What is required is right attitude and discrimination, training and discipline. Viewed in the true light, occultism is dynamic spirituality; in other words, it seeks to express and execute, bring down to the material life the powers and principles of the Spirit through the agency of the subtler forces of mind and life and the subtle physical. Occultism is naturally shunned by those who worship, who seek to experience the transcendent Spirit, God in Heaven, but it is an indispensable instrument for those who endeavour to manifest the Divine in a concrete form.

The *devotion* that accompanies *Radha's absolute consecration*, this alone has the power of bringing down *Krishna's Light in the mind*.

★

Only by the constant flaming up of *Agni* can integral *loving consecration* be realised.

And only by this absolute *loving consecration* can there be established permanent *peace in the vital*, the peace on which is based the *beginning of realisation*, leading to *Transformation*—the goal.

★

Aspire for *gratitude*—without gratitude the *mind* cannot get *purified*.

★

Realise an integral *silence* in the being and a complete force of *faith* in this silence; then only can *power* descend and bring *mastery over the things of the earth*.

★

Aspiration and *faithful devotion* firmly established in a *peaceful vital being* and crowned by a *simple sincerity* are some of the most essential conditions for a *beginning of realisation*.

★

Only to those who have a true *humility* will *power* be given.

SAVITRI

BOOK ONE CANTO FIVE

THE YOGA OF THE KING:

THE YOGA OF THE SPIRIT'S FREEDOM AND GREATNESS

THIS knowledge first he had of time-born men.
Admitted through a curtain of bright mind
That hangs between our thought and absolute sight,
He found the occult cave, the mystic door
Near to the well of vision in the soul,
And entered where the Wings of Glory brood
In the sunlit space where all is for ever known.
Indifferent to doubt and to belief,
Avid of the naked real's single shock
He shore the cord of mind that ties the earth-heart
And cast away the yoke of Matter's law.
The body's rules bound not the spirit's powers:
When life had stopped its beats, death broke not in;
He dared to live when breath and thought were still.
Thus could he step into that magic place
Which few can even glimpse with hurried glance.
All that the Gods have learned is there self-known.
There in a hidden chamber closed and mute
Are kept the record graphs of the cosmic scribe,
And there the tables of the sacred Law,
There is the Book of Being's index page,
The text and glossary of the Vedic truth
Are there; the rhythms and metres of the stars
Significant of the movements of our fate:
The symbol powers of number and of form,
And the secret code of the history of the world
And Nature's correspondence with the soul
Are written in the mystic heart of life.

In the glow of the Spirit's room of memories
He could recover the luminous marginal notes
Dotting with light the crabbed ambiguous scroll,
Rescue the preamble and the saving clause
Of the dark Agreement by which all is ruled
That rises from material Nature's sleep
To clothe the Everlasting in new shapes.
He could re-read now and interpret new
Its strange symbol letters, scattered abstruse signs,
Resolve its oracle and its paradox,
Its riddling phrases and its blindfold terms,
The deep oxymoron of its truth's repliques,
And recognise as a just necessity
Its hard conditions for the mighty work,—
Nature's impossible Herculean toil
Only her warlock wisecraft could enforce,
Its law of opposition of the Gods,
Its list of inseparable contraries.
The dumb great Mother in her cosmic trance
Exploiting for creation's joy and pain
Infinity's sanction to the birth of form,
Accepts indomitably to execute
The will to know in an inconscient world,
The will to live under a reign of death,
The thirst for rapture in a heart of flesh,
And works out through the appearance of a soul
By a miraculous birth in plasm and gas
The mystery of God's covenant with the Night.
Once more was heard in the still cosmic Mind
The Eternal's promise to his labouring Force
Inducing the world-passion to begin,
The cry of birth into mortality
And the opening verse of the tragedy of Time.
Out of the depths the world's buried secret rose;
He read the original ukase kept back
In the locked archives of the spirit's crypt,
And saw the signature and fiery seal
Of Wisdom on the dim Power's hooded work
Who builds in Ignorance the steps of Light.
A sleeping deity opened deathless eyes:
He saw the unshaped thought in soulless forms,
Knew Matter pregnant with spiritual sense,

Life its gestation of the Golden Child.
In the light flooding thought's blank vacancy,
Interpreting the universe by soul signs
He read from within the text of the without:
The riddle grew plain and lost its catch obscure.
A larger lustre lit the mighty page.
A purpose mingled with the whims of Time,
A meaning met the stumbling pace of Chance
And Fate revealed a chain of seeing will;
A conscious wideness filled the old dumb Space.
In the Void he saw throned the Omniscience supreme.

A Will, a hope immense now seized his heart,
And to discern the superhuman's form
He raised his eyes to unseen spiritual heights,
Aspiring to bring down a greater world.
The glory he had glimpsed must be his home.
A brighter heavenlier sun must soon illume
This dusk room with its dark internal stair,
The infant soul in its small nursery school
Mid objects meant for a lesson hardly learned
Outgrow its early grammar of intellect
And its imitation of Earth-Nature's art,
Its earthly dialect to God-language change,
In living symbols study Reality
And learn the logic of the Infinite.
The Ideal must be Nature's common truth,
The body illumined with the indwelling God,
The heart and mind feel one with all that is,
A conscious soul live in a conscious world.
As through a mist a sovereign peak is seen,
The greatness of the eternal Spirit appeared,
Exiled in a fragmented universe
Amid half-semblances of divine things.
These now could serve no more his regal turn:
The Immortal's pride refused the doom to live
A miser of the scanty bargain made
Between our littleness and bounded hopes
And the compassionate Infinitudes.
His height repelled the lowness of earth's state:
A wideness discontented with its frame
Resiled from poor assent to Nature's terms,

The harsh contract spurned and the diminished lease.
Only beginnings are accomplished here;
Our base's Matter seems alone complete,
An absolute machine without a soul.
Or all seems a misfit of half ideas,
Or we saddle with the vice of earthly form
A hurried imperfect glimpse of heavenly things,
Guesses and travesties of celestial types.
Here chaos sorts itself into a world,
A brief formation drifting in the void:
Apings of knowledge, unfinished arcs of power,
Flamings of beauty into earthly shapes,
Love's broken reflexes of unity
Swim, fragment mirrorings of a floating sun.
A packed assemblage of crude tentative lives
Are pieced into a tessellated whole.
There is no perfect answer to our hopes;
There are blind voiceless doors that have no key;
Thought climbs in vain and brings a borrowed light,
Cheated by counterfeits sold to us in life's mart,
Our hearts clutch at a forfeited heavenly bliss.
There is provender for the mind's satiety,
There are thrills of the flesh, but not the soul's desire.
Here even the highest rapture Time can give
Is a mimicry of ungrasped beatitudes,
A mutilated statue of ecstasy,
A wounded happiness that cannot live,
A brief felicity of mind or sense
Thrown by the World-Power to her body-slave,
Or a simulacrum of enforced delight
In the seraglios of Ignorance.
For all we have acquired soon loses worth,
An old disvalued credit in Time's bank,
Imperfection's cheque drawn on the Inconscient.
An inconsequence dogs every effort made,
And chaos waits on every cosmos formed:
In each success a seed of failure lurks.
He saw the doubtfulness of all things here,
The incertitude of man's proud confident thought,
The transience of the achievements of his force.
A thinking being in an unthinking world,
An island in the sea of the Unknown,

He is a smallness trying to be great,
An animal with some instincts of a god,
His life a story too common to be told,
His deeds a number summing up to nought,
His consciousness a torch lit to be quenched,
His hope a star above a cradle and grave.
And yet a greater destiny may be his,
For the eternal Spirit is his truth.
He can re-create himself and all around
And fashion new the world in which he lives:
He, ignorant, is a Knower beyond Time,
He is the Self above Nature, above Fate.

His soul retired from all that he had done.
Hushed was the futile din of human toil,
Forsaken wheeled the circle of the days;
In distance sank the crowded tramp of life.
The Silence was his sole companion left.
Impassive he lived immune from earthly hopes,
A figure in the ineffable Witness' shrine
Pacing the vast cathedral of his thoughts
Under its arches dim with infinity
And heavenward brooding of invisible wings.
A call was on him from intangible heights;
Indifferent to the little outpost Mind,
He dwelt in the wideness of the Eternal's reign.
His being now exceeded thinkable Space,
His boundless thought was neighbour to cosmic sight:
A universal light was in his eyes,
A golden influx flowed through heart and brain;
A force came down into his mortal limbs,
A current from eternal seas of Bliss;
He felt the invasion and the nameless joy.
Aware of his occult omnipotent Source,
Allured by the omniscient Ecstasy,
A living centre of the Illimitable
Widened to equate with the world's circumference,
He turned to his immense spiritual fate.
Abandoned on a canvas of torn air,
A picture lost in far and fading streaks,
The earth-nature's summits sank below his feet:
He climbed to meet the infinite more above.

The Immobile's ocean-silence saw him pass,
An arrow leaping through eternity
Suddenly shot from the tense bow of Time,
A ray returning to its parent sun.
Opponent of that glory of escape,
The black Inconscient swung its dragon tail
Lashing a slumberous Infinite by its force
Into the deep obscurities of form:
Death lay beneath him like a gate of sleep.
One-pointed to the immaculate Delight,
Questing for God as for a splendid prey,
He mounted burning like a cone of fire.
To a few is given that godlike rare release.
One among many thousands never touched,
Engrossed in the external world's design,
Is chosen by a secret witness Eye
And driven by a pointing hand of Light
Across his soul's unmapped immensitudes.
A pilgrim of the everlasting Truth,
Our measures cannot hold his measureless mind;
He has turned from the voices of the narrow realm
And left the little lane of human Time.
In the hushed precincts of a vaster plan
He treads the vestibules of the Unseen,
Or listens following a bodiless Guide
To a lonely cry in boundless vacancy.
All the deep cosmic murmur falling still,
He lives in the hush before the world was born,
His soul left naked to the timeless One.
Far from compulsion of created things
Thought and its shadowy idols disappear,
The moulds of form and person are undone.
The ineffable Wideness knows him for its own.
A lone forerunner of the Godward earth,
Among the symbols of yet unshaped things
Watched by closed eyes, mute faces of the Unborn,
He journeys to meet the Incommunicable,
Hearing the echo of his single steps
In the eternal courts of Solitude.
A nameless Marvel fills the motionless hours.
His spirit mingles with Eternity's heart
And bears the silence of the Infinite.

In a divine retreat from mortal thought,
In a prodigious gesture of soul-sight,
His being towered into pathless heights,
Naked of its vesture of humanity.
As thus it rose, to meet him bare and pure
A strong Descent leaped down. A Might, a Flame,
A Beauty half-visible with deathless eyes,
A violent Ecstasy, a Sweetness dire,
Enveloped him with its stupendous limbs
And penetrated nerve and heart and brain
That thrilled and fainted with the epiphany:
His nature shuddered in the Unknown's grasp.
In a moment shorter than Death, longer than Time,
By a power more ruthless than Love, happier than Heaven,
Taken sovereignly into eternal arms,
Haled and coerced by a stark absolute bliss,
In a whirlwind circuit of delight and force
Hurried into unimaginable depths,
Upborne into immeasurable heights,
It was torn out from its mortality
And underwent a new and bourneless change.
An Omniscient knowing without sight or thought,
An indecipherable Omnipotence,
A mystic Form that could contain the worlds,
Yet make one human breast its passionate shrine,
Drew him out of his seeking loneliness
Into the magnitudes of God's embrace.
As when a timeless Eye annuls the hours
Abolishing the agent and the act,
So now his spirit shone out wide, blank, pure:
His wakened mind became an empty slate
On which the Universal and Sole could write.
All that represses our fallen consciousness
Was taken from him like a forgotten load:
A fire that seemed the body of a god
Consumed the limiting figures of the past
And made large room for a new self to live.
Eternity's contact broke the moulds of sense.
A greater force than the earthly held his limbs,
Huge workings bared his undiscovered sheaths,
Strange energies wrought and screened tremendous hands,
Unwound the triple cord of mind and freed

The heavenly wideness of a Godhead's gaze.
As through a dress the wearer's shape is seen,
There reached through forms to the hidden absolute
A cosmic feeling and transcendent sight.
Increased and heightened were the instruments.
Illusion lost her aggrandising lens;
As from her failing hand the measures fell,
Atomic looked the things that loomed so large.
The little ego's ring could join no more;
In the enormous spaces of the self
The body now seemed only a wandering shell,
His mind the many-frescoed outer court
Of an imperishable Inhabitant:
His spirit breathed a superhuman air.
The imprisoned deity rent its magic fence
As with a sound of thunder and of seas,
Vast barriers crashed around the huge escape.
Immutably coeval with the world,
Circle and end of every hope and toil
Inexorably drawn round thought and act,
The fixed immovable peripheries
Effaced themselves beneath the Incarnate's tread.
The dire velamen and the bottomless crypt
Between which life and thought for ever move,
Forbidden still to cross the dim dread bounds,
The guardian darknesses mute and formidable,
Empowered to circumscribe the wingless spirit
In the boundaries of Mind and Ignorance,
Protecting no more a dual eternity
Vanished rescinding their enormous role:
Once figure of creation's vain ellipse,
The expanding zero lost its giant curve.
The old adamantine vetos stood no more:
Overpowered were earth and Nature's obsolete rule;
The python coils of the restricting Law
Could not restrain the swift arisen God:
Abolished were the scripts of destiny.
There was no small death-hunted creature more,
No fragile form of being to preserve
From an all-swallowing Immensity.
The great hammer-beats of a pent-up world-heart
Burst open the narrow dams that keep us safe

Against the forces of the universe.
The soul and cosmos faced as equal powers.
A boundless being in a measureless Time
Invaded Nature with the infinite;
He saw unpathed, unwalled his titan scope.

All was uncovered to his sealless eye.
A secret Nature stripped of her defence,
Once in a dreaded half-light formidable,
Overtaken in her mighty privacy
Lay bare to the burning splendour of his will.
In shadowy chambers lit by a strange sun
And opening hardly to hid mystic keys
Her perilous arcanes and hooded Powers
Confessed the advent of a mastering Mind
And bore the compulsion of a time-born gaze.
Incalculable in their wizard modes,
Immediate and invincible in their act,
Her secret strengths natural to greater worlds,
The occult privilege of demigods
And the sure power-pattern of her cryptic signs,
Her diagrams of geometric force,
Her potencies of marvel-fraught design
Courted employment by an earth-nursed might.
A conscious Nature's quick machinery
Armed with a latent splendour of miracle
The prophet-passion of a seeing Mind,
And the lightning bareness of a free soul-force.
All once impossible deemed could now become
A natural limb of possibility,
A new domain of normalcy supreme.
An almighty occultist erects in space
This seeming outward world which tricks the sense;
He weaves his hidden threads of consciousness,
He builds bodies for his shapeless energy;
Out of the unformed and vacant Vast he has made
His sorcery of solid images,
His magic of formative number and design,
The fixed irrational links none can annul,
This criss-cross tangle of invisible laws;
His infallible rules, his covered processes,
Achieve unerringly an inexplicable

Creation where our error carves dead frames
Of knowledge for a living ignorance.
So, sovereignly, she too creates her field,
She too can make an order of her caprice,
As if her rash superb wagered to outvie
The veiled Creator's cosmic secrecies.
The rapid footsteps of her phantasy,
Amid whose falls wonders like flowers rise,
Are surer than reason, defter than device
And swifter than Imagination's wings.
All she new-fashions by the thought and word,
Compels all substance by her wand of Mind.
Mind is a mediator divinity:
Its powers can undo all Nature's work:
Mind can suspend or change earth's concrete law.
Affranchised from earth-habit's drowsy seal
The leaden grip of Matter it can break;
Indifferent to the angry stare of Death,
It can rule as sovereign life's organic acts:
A simple fiat of its thinking force,
The casual pressure of its slight ascent
Can liberate the Energy dumb and pent
Within its chambers of mysterious trance:
It makes the body's sleep a puissant arm,
Holds still the breath, the beatings of the heart,
While the unseen is found, the impossible done,
Communicates without means the unspoken thought;
It moves events by its bare silent will,
Acts at a distance without hands or feet.
This giant Ignorance, this dwarfish Life
It can illumine with a prophet sight,
Invoke the bacchic rapture, the Fury's goad,
In our body arouse the demon or the god,
Call in the Omniscient and Omnipotent,
Awake a forgotten Almightiness within.
In its own plane a shining emperor,
Even in this rigid realm, Mind can be king:
The logic of its demigod Idea,
In the leap of a transitional moment brings
Surprises of creation never achieved
Even by Matter's strange unconscious skill.
All's miracle here and can by miracle change.

This is that secret Nature's edge of might.
On the margin of great immaterial planes,
In kingdoms of an untrammelled glory of force,
Where Mind is master of the life and form
And soul fulfils its thoughts by its own power,
She meditates upon mighty words and looks
On the unseen links that join the parted spheres.
Thence to the initiate who observes her laws
She brings the light of her mysterious realms:
Here where he stands, his feet on a prostrate world,
His mind no more cast into Matter's mould,
Over their bounds in spurts of splendid strength
She carries their magician processes
And the formulas of their stupendous speech,
Till heaven and hell become purveyors to earth
And the universe the slave of mortal will.
A mediatrix with veiled and nameless gods
Whose alien will touches our human life,
Imitating the World-Magician's ways
She invents for her self-bound free will its grooves:
From every source she has taken her cunning means,
All worlds she makes the partners of her work;
She draws from the free-love marriage of the planes
Elements for her creation's tour-de-force.
A wonder-weft of knowledge incalculable,
A compendium of divine invention's feats
She has combined to make the unreal true
Or liberate suppressed realities:
Pell-mell she shepherds her occult mightinesses,
Her mnemonics of the craft of the Infinite,
Jets of the screened subliminal's caprice,
Tags of the gramarye of Inconscience,
And freaks of a sovereign Truth without a law
And peeps and lightning-leaps of prophecy,
And warnings from the daemonic inner voice,
Oracles that break out from behind the shrine
And intimations to the inner ear,
Abrupt interventions stark and absolute
And the superconscient's unaccountable acts,
Have woven her balanced web of miracles
And the weird technique of her tremendous art.
This bizarre kingdom passed into his charge.

As one resisting more the more she loves,
Her great possessions and her power and love
She gave, compelled, with a reluctant joy;
Herself she gave for rapture and for use.
Absolved from aberrations in deep ways,
The end she recovered for which she was made:
She turned against the evil she had helped
Her engined wrath, her invisible means to slay;
Her dangerous moods and arbitrary force
She surrendered to the service of the soul
And the control of a spiritual will.
A greater despot tamed her despotism.
Assailed, surprised in the fortress of her self,
Conquered by her own unexpected King,
Fulfilled and ransomed by her servitude,
She yielded in a vanquished ecstasy,
Her sealed hieratic wisdom forced from her,
Fragments of the mystery of omnipotence.

A border sovereign is the occult Force.
A threshold guardian of the earth-scene's Beyond,
She has canalised the outbreaks of the Gods.
As gold-robed handmaids wait upon a queen,
Behind her pressed a throng of radiant planes;
Her reign received their numberless influences,
Their lion-forces crouched beneath her feet;
The future sleeps unknown behind their doors.
There are infernal vistas, peeps divine;
Ideas tempt endlessly the exploring mind
And countless voices visit the charmed ear;
A million figures pass and are seen no more.
This seemed a forefront of God's thousandfold house,
A beginning of the half-screened Invisible.
A magic porch of entry glimmered there,
A court of the mystical traffic of the worlds,
A balcony and miraculous façade.
Above her opened higher immensities;
All the unknown looked out from boundlessness:
It showed upon an edge of hourless Time,
Gazing out of some everlasting Now,
Its shadows gleaming with the birth of gods,
Its foreheads glowing with the Oversoul,

Its forms projected from the Unknowable,
Its eyes dreaming of the Ineffable,
Its faces staring into eternity.
Life in him learned its huge subconscient rear;
The little fronts unlocked to the unseen Vasts:
Her gulfs stood nude, her far transcendences
Flamed in transparencies of crowded light.

A giant order was discovered here,
Of which the tassel and extended fringe
Are the scant stuff of our material lives.
This overt universe whose figures hide
The secrets of the superconscient self,
Wrote clear the letters of its glowing code:
A map of subtle signs surpassing thought
Was hung upon a wall of inmost mind.
Illumining the world's concrete images
Into significant symbols by its gloss,
It offered to the intuitive exegete
Its reflex of the eternal Mystery.
Ascending and descending twixt life's poles
The serried kingdoms of the graded Law
Plunged from the Everlasting into Time,
Then glad of a glory of multitudinous mind
And rich with life's adventure and delight
And packed with the beauty of Matter's shapes and hues
Climbed back from Time into undying Self,
Up a golden ladder carrying the Soul,
Tying with diamond threads the Spirit's extremes.
In this drop from consciousness to consciousness
Each leaned on the occult Inconscient's power,
The fountain of its needed Ignorance,
Archmason of the limits by which it lives.
In this soar from consciousness to consciousness
Each lifted tops to That from which it came,
Origin of all that it had ever been
And home of all that it could still become.
An organ scale of the Eternal's acts,
Mounting to their climax in an endless Calm,
Paces of the many-visaged Wonderful,
Predestined stadia of the evolving Way,
Measures of the stature of the growing soul,

They interpreted existence to itself
And, mediating twixt the heights and deeps,
United the veiled married opposites
And linked creation to the Ineffable.
A last high world was seen where all worlds meet;
In its summit gleam where Night is not nor Sleep,
The light began of the Trinity supreme.
All there discovered what it seeks for here.
It freed the finite into boundlessness
And rose into its own eternities.
The Inconscient found its heart of consciousness,
The idea and feeling groping in Ignorance
Their passionate clutch upon the body of Truth,
The music born in Matter's silences
The meaning it had held but could not voice;
The perfect rhythm now only sometimes dreamed
Answered at last to the torn earth's hungry need;
A grand solution closed the long impasse
To which the heights of mortal effort come.
A reconciling Wisdom looked on life;
It took the striving undertones of mind,
It took the confused refrain of human hopes
And made of them a sweet and happy call:
It lifted from an underground of pain
The inarticulate murmur of our lives
And found for it a sense illimitable.
A mighty oneness its perpetual theme,
It caught the soul's faint scattered utterances,
Read hardly twixt our lines of rigid thought
Or mid this drowse and coma on Matter's breast
Heard like disjointed mutterings in sleep;
It grouped the golden links that they had lost
And showed to them their divine unity,
Saving from the error of divided self
The deep spiritual cry in all that is.
All the great Words that toiled to express the One
Were lifted into an absoluteness of light,
An ever burning Revelation's fire
And the immortality of the eternal Voice.
There was no quarrel more of truth with truth;
The endless chapter of their differences
Rewritten by a sole omniscient Scribe,

Its discords merged in an all-seeing speech
That garbed the initial and original thought
With the finality of an ultimate phrase:
United were Time's creative mood and tense
To the style and syntax of Identity.
A paean swelled from the lost musing deeps;
An anthem pealed to the triune ecstasies,
A cry of the moments to the Immortal's bliss.
As if the strophes of a cosmic ode,
A hierarchy of climbing harmonies
Peopled with voices and with visages
Aspired in a crescendo of the Gods
From Matter's abysses to the Spirit's peaks.
Above were the Immortal's changeless seats,
White chambers of dalliance with Eternity
And the stupendous gates of the Alone.
Across the unfolding of the seas of self
Appeared the deathless countries of the One.
A many-miracled consciousness unrolled
Vast aim and process and unfettered norms,
A larger Nature's great familiar roads.
Affranchised from the net of earthly sense
Calm continents of potency were glimpsed;
Homelands of beauty shut to human eyes,
Half-seen at first through wonder's gleaming lids,
Surprised the vision with felicity;
Sunbelts of knowledge, moonbelts of delight
Stretched out in an ecstasy of widenesses
Beyond our indigent corporeal range.
There he could enter, there awhile abide.
A voyager upon uncharted routes
Fronting the viewless danger of the Unknown,
Adventuring across enormous realms,
He broke into another Space and Time.

END OF CANTO V

END OF BOOK I

SRI AUROBINDO

THE MASTER OF THE WORK*

(2)

A TRANSCENDENT who is beyond all world and all Nature and yet possesses the world and its nature, who has descended with something of himself into it and is shaping it into that which as yet it is not, is the Source of our being, the Source of our works and their Master. But the seat of the Transcendent Consciousness is above in an absoluteness of divine Existence—and there too is the absolute Power, Truth, Bliss of the Eternal—of which our mentality can form no conception and of which even our greatest spiritual experience is only a diminished reflection in the spiritualised mind and heart, a faint shadow, a thin derivate. Yet proceeding from It there is a sort of golden corona of Light, Power, Bliss and Truth—a divine Truth-Consciousness as the ancient mystics called it, a Supermind, a Gnosis, with which this world of a lesser consciousness proceeding by Ignorance is in secret relation and which alone maintains it and prevents it from falling into a disintegrated chaos. The powers we are now satisfied to call gnosis, intuition or illumination are only fainter lights of which that is the full and flaming source, and between the highest human intelligence and it there lie many levels of ascending consciousness, highest mental or overmental, which we would have to conquer before we arrived there or could bring down its greatness and glory here. Yet, however difficult, that ascent, that victory is the destiny of the human spirit and that luminous descent or bringing down of the divine Truth is the inevitable term of the troubled evolution of the earth-nature; that intended consummation is its raison d'etre, our culminating state and the explanation of our terrestrial existence. For though the Transcendental Divine is already here as the Purushottama in the secret heart of our mystery, He is veiled by many coats and disguises of his magic world-wide Yoga-Maya; it is only by the ascent and victory of the Soul here in the body that the disguises can fall away and the dynamis of the supreme Truth replace this tangled weft of half-truth that becomes creative error, this emergent Knowledge that is converted by its plunge into the inconscience of Matter and its slow partial return towards itself into an effective Ignorance.

For here in the world, though the gnosis is there secretly behind existence, what acts is not the gnosis but a magic of Knowledge-Ignorance, an incalculable yet apparently mechanical Overmind Maya. The Divine appears to

* The Synthesis of Yoga, Chapter XI (Revised Version)

us here in one view as an equal, inactive and impersonal Witness Spirit, an immobile consenting Purusha not bound by quality or Space or Time, whose support or sanction is given impartially to the play of all action and energies which the transcendent Will has once permitted and authorised to fulfil themselves in the cosmos. This Witness Spirit, this immobile Self in things, seems to will nothing and determine nothing; yet we become aware that his very passivity, his silent presence compels all things to travel even in their ignorance towards a divine goal and attracts through division towards a yet unrealised oneness. Yet no supreme infallible Divine Will seems to be there, only a widely deployed Cosmic Energy or a mechanical executive Process, Prakriti. This is one side of the cosmic Self; the other presents itself as a universal Divine, one in being, multiple in personality and power, who conveys to us, when we enter into the consciousness of his universal forces, a sense of infinite quality and will and act and a world-wide knowledge and a one yet innumerable delight; for through him we become one with all existences not only in their essence but in their play of action, see ourself in all and all in ourself, perceive all knowledge and thought and feeling as motions of the one Mind and Heart, all energy and action as kinetics of the one Will in power, all matter and form as particles of the one Body, all personalities as projections of the one Person, all egos as deformations of the one and sole real "I" in existence. In him we no longer stand separate, but lose our active ego in the universal movement, even as by the Witness who is without qualities and for ever unattached and unentangled, we lose our static ego in the universal peace.

And yet there remains a contradiction between these two terms, the aloof divine Silence and the all-embracing divine Action, which we may heal in ourselves in a certain manner, in a certain high degree which seems to us complete, yet is not complete because it cannot altogether transform and conquer. A universal Peace, Light, Power, Bliss is ours, but its effective expression is not that of the Truth-Consciousness, the divine Gnosis, but still, though wonderfully freed, uplifted and illumined, supports only the present self-expression of the Cosmic Spirit and does not transform, as would a transcendental Descent, the ambiguous symbols and veiled mysteries of a world of Ignorance. Ourselves are free, but the earth-consciousness remains in bondage; only a farther transcendental ascent and descent can entirely heal the contradiction and transform and deliver.

For there is yet a third intensely close and personal aspect of the Master of Works, which is a key to his sublimest hidden mystery and ecstasy; for He detaches from the secret of the hidden Transcendence and the ambiguous display of the cosmic Movement an individual Power of the Divine that can mediate between the two and bridge our passage from the one to the other. In this aspect the transcendent and universal person

of the Divine conforms itself to our individualised personality and accepts a personal relation with us, at once identified with us as our supreme Self and yet close and different as our Master, Friend, Lover, Teacher, our Father and our Mother, our Playmate in the great world-game who has disguised himself throughout as friend and enemy, helper and opponent and, in all relations and in all workings that affect us, has led our steps towards our perfection and our release. It is through this more personal manifestation that we are admitted to some possibility of the complete transcendental experience; for in him we meet the One not merely in a liberated calm and peace, not merely with a passive or active submission in our works or through the mystery of union with a universal Knowledge and Power filling and guiding us, but with an ecstasy of divine Love and divine Delight that shoots up beyond silent Witness and active World-Power to some positive divination of a greater beatific secret. For it is not so much knowledge leading to some ineffable Absolute, not so much works lifting us beyond world-process to the originating supreme Knower and Master, but rather this thing most intimate to us, yet at present most obscure, which keeps for us wrapt in its passionate veil the deep and rapturous secret of the transcendent Godhead and some absolute positiveness of its perfect Being, its all-concentrating Bliss, its mystic Ananda.

But the individual relation with the Divine does not always or from the beginning bring into force a widest enlargement or a highest self-exceeding. At first this Godhead close to our being or immanent within us can be felt fully only in the scope of our personal nature and experience, a Leader and Master, a Guide and Teacher, a Friend and Lover, or else a Spirit, Power or Presence, constituting and uplifting our upward and enlarging movement by the force of his intimate reality inhabiting the heart or presiding over our nature from above even our highest intelligence. It is our personal evolution that is his preoccupation, a personal relation that is our joy and fulfilment, the building of our nature into his divine image that is our self-finding and perfection. The outside world seems to exist only as a field for this growth and a provider of materials or of helping and opposing forces for its successive stages. Our works done in it are His works, but even when they serve some temporary universal end, their main purpose for us is to make outwardly dynamic or give inward power to our relations with this immanent Divine. Many seekers ask for no more or see the continuation and fulfilment of this spiritual flowering only in heavens beyond; the union is consummated and made perpetual in an eternal dwelling-place of His perfection, joy and beauty. But this is not enough for the integral seeker; however intense and beautiful, a personal isolated achievement cannot be his whole aim or his entire existence. A time must come when the personal opens out to the universal; our very individuality,

spiritual, mental, vital, physical even, becomes universalised: it is seen as a power of His universal Force and cosmic Spirit, or else it contains the universe in that ineffable wideness which comes to the individual consciousness when it breaks its bonds and flows upward towards the Transcendent and on every side into the Infinite.

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In a Yoga lived entirely on the spiritualised mental plane it is possible and even usual for these three fundamental aspects of the Divine—the Individual or Immanent, the Cosmic and the Transcendent—to stand out as separate realisations. Each by itself then appears sufficient to satisfy the yearning of the seeker. Alone with the personal Divine in the inner heart's illumined secret chamber, he can build his being into the Beloved's image and ascend out of fallen Nature to dwell with Him in some heaven of the Spirit. Absolved in the cosmic wideness, released from ego, his personality reduced to a point of working of the universal Force, himself calm, liberated, deathless in universality, motionless in the Witness Self even while outspread without limit in unending Space and Time, he can enjoy in the world the freedom of the Timeless. One-pointed towards some ineffable Transcendence, casting away his personality, shedding from him the labour and trouble of the universal Dynamis, he can escape into an inexpressible Nirvana, annul all things in an intolerant exaltation of flight into the Incommunicable.

But none of these achievements is enough for one who seeks the wide completeness of an integral Yoga. An individual salvation is not enough for him; for he finds himself opening to a cosmic consciousness which far exceeds by its breadth and vastness the narrower intensity of a limited individual fulfilment, and its call is imperative; driven by that immense compulsion, he must break through all separative boundaries, spread himself in world-Nature, contain the universe. Above too, there is urgent upon him a dynamic realisation pressing from the Supreme upon this world of beings, and only some encompassing and exceeding of the cosmic consciousness can release into manifestation here that yet unlavished splendour. But the cosmic consciousness too is not sufficient; for it is not all the Divine Reality, not integral. There is a divine secret behind personality that he must discover; there, waiting in it to be delivered here into Time, stands the mystery of the embodiment of the Transcendence. In the cosmic consciousness there remains at the end a hiatus, an unequal equation of a highest Knowledge that can liberate but not effectuate with a Power seeming to use a limited Knowledge or masking itself with a surface Ignorance that can create but creates imperfection or a perfection transient,

limited and in fetters. On one side there is a free undynamic Witness, and on the other side a bound Executrix of action who has not been given all the means of action. The reconciliation of these companions and opposites seems to be reserved, postponed, held back in an Unmanifest still beyond us. But, again, a mere escape into some absolute Transcendence leaves personality unfulfilled and the universal action inconclusive and cannot satisfy the integral seeker. He feels that the Truth that is for ever is a Power that creates as well as a stable Existence; it is not a Power solely of illusory or ignorant manifestation. The eternal Truth can manifest its truths in Time; it can create in Knowledge and not only in Inconscience and Ignorance. A divine Descent no less than an ascent to the Divine is possible; there is a prospect of the bringing down of a future perfection and a present deliverance. As his knowledge widens, it becomes for him more and more evident that it was this for which the Master of Works cast down the soul within him here as a spark of His fire into the darkness, that it might grow there into a centre of the Light that is for ever.

The Transcendent, the Universal, the Individual are three powers overarching, underlying and penetrating the whole manifestation; this is the first of the Trinities. In the unfolding of consciousness also, these are the three fundamental terms and none of them can be neglected if we would have the experience of the whole Truth of existence. Out of the individual we wake into a vaster freer cosmic consciousness; but out of the universal too with its complex of forms and powers we must emerge by a still greater self-exceeding into a consciousness without limits that is founded on the Absolute. And yet in this ascension we do not really abolish but take up and transfigure what we seem to leave; for there is a height where the three live eternally in each other, on that height they are blissfully joined in a nodus of their harmonised oneness. But that summit is above the highest and largest spiritualised mentality, even if some reflection of it can be experienced there; mind, to attain to it, to live there, must exceed itself and be transformed into a supramental gnostic light, power and substance. In this lower diminished consciousness a harmony can indeed be attempted, but it must always remain imperfect; a co-ordination is possible, not a simultaneous fused fulfilment. An ascent out of the mind is, for any greater realisation, imperative. Or else there must be, with the ascent or consequent to it, a dynamic descent of the self-existent Truth that exists always uplifted in its own light above Mind, eternal, prior to the manifestation of Life and Matter.

For Mind is Maya, *sat-asat*: there is a field of embrace of the true and the false, the existent and the non-existent, and it is in that ambiguous field that Mind seems to reign; but even in its own reign it is in truth a diminished consciousness, it is not part of the original and supremely originating power

of the Eternal. Even if Mind is able to reflect some image of essential Truth in its substance, yet the dynamic force and action of Truth appears in it always broken and divided. All Mind can do is to piece together the fragments or deduce a unity; truth of Mind is only a half-truth or a portion of a puzzle. Mental knowledge is always relative, partial and inconclusive, and its outgoing action and creation come out still more confused in its steps or precise only in narrow limits and by imperfect piecings together. Even in this diminished consciousness the Divine manifests as a Spirit in Mind, just as He moves as a Spirit in Life or dwells still more obscurely as a Spirit in Matter; but not here is His full dynamic revelation, not here the perfect identities of the Eternal. Only when we cross the border into a larger luminous consciousness and self-aware substance where divine Truth is a native and not a stranger, will there be revealed to us the Master of our existence in the imperishable integral truth of His being and His powers and His workings. Only there, too, will His works in us assume the flawless movement of His unfailing supramental purpose.

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But that is the end of a long and difficult journey, and the Master of works does not wait till then to meet the seeker on the path of Yoga and put His secret or half-shown Hand upon him and upon his inner life and actions. Already He was there in the world as the Originator and Receiver of works behind the dense veils of the Inconscient, disguised in force of Life, visible to the Mind through symbol godheads and figures. It may well be in these disguises that He first meets the soul destined to the way of the integral Yoga. Or even, wearing still vaguer masks, He may be conceived by us as an Ideal or mentalised as an abstract Power of Love, Good, Beauty or Knowledge; or, as we turn our feet towards the Way, He may come to us veiled as the call of Humanity or a Will in things that drives towards the deliverance of the world from the grasp of Darkness and Falsehood and Death and Suffering—the great quaternary of the Ignorance. Then, after we have entered the path, He envelops us with His wide and mighty liberating Impersonality, or moves near to us with the face and form of a personal Godhead. In and around us we feel a Power that upholds and protects and cherishes; we hear a Voice that guides, a conscious Will greater than ourselves rules us; an imperative Force moves our thought and actions and our very body; an ever-widening Consciousness assimilates ours, a living Light of Knowledge lights all within, or a Beatitude invades us; a Mightiness presses from above, concrete, massive and overpowering, and penetrates and pours itself into the very stuff of our nature; a Peace sits there, a Light, a Bliss, a Strength, a Greatness. Or there are relations, personal, intimate as

life itself, sweet as love, encompassing like the sky, deep like deep waters. A Friend walks at our side; a Lover is with us in our heart's secrecy; a Master of the Work and the Ordeal points our way; a Creator of things uses us as His instrument; we are in the arms of the eternal Mother. All these more seizable aspects in which the Ineffable meets us are truths and not mere helpful symbols or useful imaginations; but as we progress, their first imperfect formulations in our experience yield to a larger vision of the one Truth that is behind them. At each step their mere mental masks are shed and they acquire a larger, a profounder, a more intimate significance. At last on the supramental borders all these Godheads combine their sacred forms and, without at all ceasing to be, coalesce together. On this path the Divine Aspects have not revealed themselves only in order to be cast away; they are not temporary spiritual conveniences or compromises with an illusory Consciousness or dream-figures mysteriously cast upon us by the incommunicable superconscience of the Absolute; on the contrary, their power increases and their absoluteness reveals itself as they draw near to the Truth from which they issue.

For that now superconscient Transcendence is a Power as well as an Existence. The supramental Transcendence is not a vacant Wonder, but an inexpressible which contains for ever all essential things that have issued from it; it holds them there in their supreme everlasting reality and their own characteristic absolutes. The diminution, division, degradation that create here the sense of an unsatisfactory puzzle, a mystery of Maya, themselves diminish and fall from us in our ascension, and the Divine Powers assume their real forms and appear more and more as the terms of a Truth in process of realisation here. A soul of the Divine is here slowly awaking out of its involution and concealment in the material Inconscience. The Master of our works is not a Master of illusions, but a supreme Reality who is working out his self-expressive realities delivered slowly from the cocoons of the Ignorance in which for the purposes of an evolutionary manifestation they were allowed for a while to slumber. For the supramental Transcendence is not a thing absolutely apart and unconnected with our present existence. It is a greater Light out of which all this has come for the adventure of the Soul lapsing into the Inconscience and emerging out of it, and, while that adventure proceeds, it waits superconscient above our minds till it can become conscious in us. Hereafter it will unveil itself and by the unveiling reveal to us all the significance of our own being and our works; for it will disclose the Divine whose fuller manifestation in the world will release and accomplish that covert significance.

In that disclosure the Transcendent Divine will be more and more made known to us as the supreme Existence and the Perfect Source of all that we are; but equally we shall see Him as a Master of works and creation

prepared to pour out more and more of Himself into the field of His manifestation. The cosmic consciousness and its action will appear no longer as a huge regulated Chance, but as a field of the manifestation; there the Divine is seen as a presiding and pervading Cosmic Spirit who receives all out of the Transcendence and develops what descends into forms that are now an opaque disguise or a baffling half-disguise, but destined to be a transparent revelation. The individual consciousness will recover its true sense and action; for it is the form of a Soul sent out from the Supreme and, in spite of all appearances, a nucleus or nebula in which the Divine Mother-Force is at work for the victorious embodiment of the timeless and formless Divine in Time and Matter. This will reveal itself slowly to our vision and experience as the will of the Master of works and as their own ultimate significance, which alone gives to world-creation and to our own action in the world a light and a meaning. To recognise that and to strive towards its effectuation is the whole burden of the Way of Divine Works in the integral Yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE FUTURE POETRY (continued)*

THE SUN OF POETIC TRUTH

WHAT is the kind of truth which we can demand from the spirit of poetry? We have all our own notions of the Truth and that gives an ambiguous character to the word. But first there is the primary objection that the poet has nothing at all to do with any other kind of truth or with Truth at all for her own sake, but is a lover only of Beauty, not truth but imagination her winged servant and the radiant messenger of the Muse. But even this point of view, deeply considered, only shows that art is not an imitation or reproduction of outward Nature, but rather missioned to give by the aid of a transmuting faculty something more inwardly true than the external life and appearance.

And next, there is the quite opposite idea that the material of poetry is the reality of life in its most strenuous vital sense. And we are even told that poetry to be true to life must manage her rhythmic movement so as to creep and trip and run and bound along with it, reproduce every bang and stumble and shuffle and thump of the vital steps. Here what is demanded

* A summary of Sri Aurobindo's Future Poetry ("Arya", 1917-1920)

is not beauty but power or rather force. And it cannot be denied that the crudity of actual life so treated and heightened in art—for art cannot merely reproduce, it cannot help heightening—gives us a new sensation, because a crude and heady wine setting up an agreeable disturbance in the midriff and bowels and a violent satisfaction in the brain and can be given by a powerful writer a wide appeal demanding no effort of taste or understanding from the average man.

Then there is the old academic conception, truth of a certain selective imagination and taste consonant with reason. And in this connection we have many familiar notions chasing each other across the field, of poetry and philosophy, of poetry as a criticism of life, etc.

The poetic Truth of which I am speaking has nothing to do with any of these limitations. Truth, as she is seen by us in the end, is an infinite goddess; she is no enemy of imagination which is perhaps the very colour of her creative process. Now it is something of this infinite Truth which poetry succeeds in giving us with a high power, in its own way of beauty, by its own means. But truth of poetry is not truth of philosophy or truth of science or truth of religion. A poet may have a religious creed or subscribe to a system of philosophy, but the moment he begins to argue out his system intellectually in verse or puts up a dressed-up science straight into metre or else inflicts rhymed sermons or theological disputations on us, he is breaking the law (even though all this has often been done with a tolerable, sometimes a considerable or total success).

For this is another cult and worship and the moment he stands before the altar of the Muse, he has to change the robes of his mind and serve the rites of a different consecration. Still it remains true that the poet may express precisely the same thing in essence as the philosopher or the man of religion or the man of science, provided he converts it into truth of poetry; it will be still better for his art if he saw it originally with the poetic insight. This distinction between poetic and other truth, well enough felt but not always well observed, and their fusion and meeting-place are worth dwelling upon; for if poetry is to do all it can for us in the new age, it will include increasingly in its scope much that will be common to it with philosophy, religion and even in a broader sense with science, and yet it will at the same time develop more intensely its own insight and its own manner.

There is a whole gulf of difference. The philosopher sees in the dry light of reason, proceeds dispassionately by a severe analysis and abstraction of the intellectual content of the truth, a logical slow close stepping from idea to pure idea, a method difficult and nebulous to the ordinary, hard, arid, impossible to the poetic mind. The scientist proceeds also by the intellectual reason but with a microscopic scrutiny which it brings to bear on an analysis of sensible fact and process and on the correct measure and relation

of force and energy as it is seen working on the phenomenal stuff of existence, and joins continually link of fact with fact and coil of process with process till he has under his hand at least in skeleton and tissue the whole connected chain of apparent things. But to the poetic mind this is a dead, mechanical thing. The poetic mind loves to look on breathing acting life in its perfected synthesis and rhythm, seizes the soul of wonder of things, not the mechanical miracle; it sees at once in a flood of coloured light, in a moved experience, in an ecstasy of the coming of the word, in splendours of form, in a spontaneous leaping out of inspired idea upon idea, sparks of the hoof-beats of the white-flame horse, Dadhikravan, galloping up the mountain of the gods or breath and hue of wing striking into wing of irised broods of Thought flying over earth or up towards heaven.

The initial function of religion again is to make clear the approaches of the soul to the Highest, to God, at first by laying on the mind a scheme of religious knowledge or guiding creed and dogma, or moral instruction, a thing apart in its own field from poetry. But in its truly revealing side of intuitive being and experience we find that the essence of religion is an aspiration and adoration of the soul towards the Divine; and poetry also on its heights turns to the same things. The characteristic method and first field of all these things is indeed wide apart, but at their end when they come into their deepest spirit, they begin to approach each other and touch; and because of this greater affinity, philosophy, psychic and spiritual science and religion are found in the ancient Indian culture woven into one unity, and when they turn to the expression of their most intuitive experience, it is always the poetic word which they use.

The meeting of these different fields and paths is not here at the base, but on the tops. The steps of poetry rise to these heights on her own side of the mountain of the gods. But even at different altitudes the poet brings out, sometimes as if by accident, sometimes with a conscious intention the same essential truths as the philosopher or the man of religion. An instance or two will show the approximation and the difference. Religion brings us a command to love our neighbours as ourselves and even our enemies. Listening to Creon's fierce reproach to Antigone in her unnatural refusal to hate the national enemy, we hear suddenly start out the high and proud reply, "Not to join in hate, but to join in love was I born!" The Athenian poet intended no moral instruction, calls up no religious emotion into his line, is concerned only with a crucial situation in life, the revolt of natural affection against the rigid claims of law, Nation, State. It is a simple cry of the voice of nature and life, yet there breathes behind it a greater thought which is not so far from the truth underlying religious teaching and spiritual experience. The poet hardly himself knows what he has done since he is absorbed in sight and satisfied with the joy of beautiful creation.

The poet of the Gita has the conscious intention of laying the form of unity on the soul of the hearer and moving him to seek the full experience. That is something high, grave, couched in the language of the inspired reason, yet poetical, because it adds to the fundamental idea of visualising and bringing home the spiritual experience, the sustaining emotion of the thing felt and a touch of life. The same uniting alchemy and fusion between truth of philosophy and poetic truth is continually found in Indian literature. All the old Rig Veda, all the Vaishnava poetry of North and South had behind it an elaborate Yoga. Today much of the poetry of Tagore is the sign of such a sadhana. One may almost though not quite say that there is nothing in infinite Truth that the poet cannot make his material; the condition, the limitation, is only in the way and manner,—but that means enormously much.

The real distinction therefore is in the primary or essential aim of poetry and in the imperative condition which that aim lays upon the art. Its function is not to teach truth of any particular kind, nor indeed to teach at all, nor to pursue knowledge nor to serve any religious or ethical aim, but to embody beauty in the word and give delight. But there are always three things which we find present in utterance and which may be taken as the tests of its measure of power. First, there is a force of inspired seeing which gives us the appeal of some reality of self or mind or world. Then, there must be the touch, presence, breath of the very life, not the outward only, but the inward life, a creative interpretation which brings home to us as much as may be of what Nature is or things or we are. And again that must carry in it and arouse in us an emotion of its touch on the soul, not the raw emotion of the vital parts, but a spiritual essence of feeling to which our inner strands can vibrate. A direct spiritual perception and vision called by us intuition, however helped or prepared by other powers, can alone avail to give us these things. Imagination is only the poet's most powerful aid for the discovery and interpretative creation. The poet having to bring home something, even in things common, which is not obvious to surface experience, avails himself of image, symbol. His fictions are not charming airy nothings.

It is in this sense that we can speak of the sun of poetic truth in whose universal light the poet creates. But all depends on how he sees or uses the light, and there are many ways of doing both. And where then is the highest range of sight into which the mind of the poet can rise? If some kind of intuitive seeing is at the back of his imaginative vision and the real power that calls down the inspired word, it will be only when he can rise to its source and live in the fullness of a highest intuitive mind. The poetry which will accomplish this will be able to see, though in another way than that of philosophy and religion, the self of the Eternal. Much has been

done by the art of self-expression; much remains to be done. A beginning of such an endeavour we have seen to be the noblest strain in recent work. The Veda speaks in one of its symbolic hints of the fountain of eternal Truth round which stand the illumined powers of thought and life. There under the eyes of delight and the face of imperishable beauty of the Mother of creation and bride of the eternal Spirit they lead their immortal dance. The poet visits that marvellous source in his superconscient mind and brings to us some strain or some vision of her face and her works. To find the way into that circle with the waking self is to be the seer-poet and discover the highest power of the inspired word, the mantra.

THE BREATH OF GREATER LIFE

The turn of poetry in the age which we have left behind was, as was inevitable in a reign of dominant intellectuality, a preoccupation with reflective thought; the poets of the middle nineteenth century in England and America philosophised, moralised or criticised life in energetic and telling or beautiful and attractive or competent and cultured verse; but they did not represent life with success or interpret it with high poetic power or inspired insight and were not stirred and uplifted by any deeply great vision of truth. It gives the impression of a heavy air, an inhibition of the greater creative movements. The few poets who strained towards a nearer hold upon life, had to struggle against this atmosphere which weighed upon their mind and clogged their breath. And therefore in this epoch of bursting into new fields, one of the most insistent demands and needs of the human mind, not only in poetry, but in thought itself and in spirit, has been to lessen the tyranny of the reasoning and critical intellect, to return to the power and sincerity of life.

The turn is in itself perfectly sound and its direction is to a certain extent on the right line, even if it does not yet altogether see its own end and there are many mistaken directions of this urge. The enlightening power of the poet's creation is vision of truth, its moving power is a passion of beauty and delight, but its sustaining power and that which makes it great and vital is the breath of life. But words are ambiguous things and we must see what is the full extent of our meaning when we say, as we may say, that the poet's first concern and his concern always is with living beauty and reality, with life.

SISIR KUMAR GHOSH

THE NEW YEAR MESSAGE: ITS SIGNIFICANCE

"Forward, for ever forward!
At the end of the tunnel is the light...
At the end of the fight is the victory!"

IN these assured notes the Mother has voiced the authentic call. It is a call to the individual seeker after Light, to the spiritual fighter for victory. It is also a call to mankind groping in the night, crying for the Light.

Never before perhaps was humanity so distraught as it is today. Ideals for which its leaders toiled for centuries have crumbled down. Moral values are fast becoming things of the past. Ideals heralded with such a fanfare on the wings of Napoleonic victories in the last century no longer evoke even lip-sympathy. Truth as a governing principle in international relations has ceased to exist. Humanity appears to have fallen so low, slipped down so steep, that thinkers have begun to lose faith in the future.

Hegel's bitter epigram that the one lesson we learn from History is that mankind refuses to learn from it, is more true today than ever. Mankind has been continuously passing through crisis after crisis apparently without any chastening effect. The latest cataclysm has had absolutely no effect towards heightening the tone of the collective conscience. In fact, the War has not yet stopped; it continues, with this difference—that the war is not openly on the battlefield but on other more crucial planes, and that not between the erstwhile Allies and the Enemy but among the Allies themselves. Nothing is more tragic than to see Humanity losing faith in itself, accepting the inevitability of another armageddon; there is not merely a looking forward with resignation but even a positive contribution to ultimate self-destruction. It is said that our present cycle of civilisation has almost failed and it shall go the way of those of earlier peoples.

It is to this disillusioned, reeling humanity that this call is addressed. A couple of centuries is but a speck in the long mighty roll of Time. Humanity is not a creation of an extra-cosmic Chance, destined to go round and round itself in each cycle and perish. The universe is a willed creation of a Supra-cosmic Truth-existence and has a purpose. Our earth is its pivotal point and Man, as its highest evolved being, occupies a supreme position. Mankind has progressively risen and continues to do so. Its progress may have been slow, but it is purposive. Starting from the individual unit, the aggregate-units have been progressively larger and larger—the family, the clan, the tribe, the larger groupings and the nations with their corresponding terri-

torial habitats, the hamlet, the village, the city, the principality, the country. It was inevitable that each expansion from the smaller to the larger unit should have been accompanied by some crisis or other. Today when Nature is preparing to take the next inevitable leap from the nation-group to one International Unit, the crisis is the severest. The group-egos are fighting hard for self-preservation and instinctively resist the process of being taken in by the Collective Whole. The present struggles, distrusts, rivalries—all result from this inner pressure for the next change. They are inevitable, even as physical ailments in the climacterics of the individual. Can they persist for ever? Mankind has a destiny, a destiny to grow into a perfect, ordered and willed creation of a Creative Intelligence and cannot escape it. The way may be long; the path may be dark at many turns and points; but the end is there, an "ending" into the Light of Peace and Harmony. It may have to struggle for its very life; forces of darkness and misery fight to the last to preserve Man for their long-established supremacy. Yet the Creative Spirit has willed; the Truth-Will working in the heart of Humanity cannot be denied for all time; victory over the malevolent forces is a certainty. To be disheartened by temporary failures does not accord with the workings of Truth-Will turned towards the destination of mankind. The Truth, the Good, the Beautiful, cannot fail for ever. Steadfast adherence to these ideals should be active and, with faith in the wisdom of the guiding Will, mankind must direct its endeavours towards a larger and larger harmony leading eventually to the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. This no nation or group of nations can achieve by the help of the material forces at its disposal, nor by the helpful element of the so-called moral principles backing the brute force of men. It can be done only with the service of higher and supra-ethical spiritual elements reinforced by the Divine Powers that guard the onward march of men and nations. Indeed it is they that ultimalely guide the destiny of mankind.

II

But the collective life depends for its strength and progress mainly on the lead and help given by its tallest figures. It is the individual who helps and on critical occasions orientates also the lines of development his environment shall take—though it is true that every individual is not meant for that role. The fulcrum of life and progress lies in a subtler and inner plane, and only those who are competent to wield it are the real leaders who fight the battle and seek for the Light. It is to these seekers for Light, aspirants for Truth, that the message is primarily addressed. Of all the paths, that of the spiritual seeker is the hardest. A few are called to it and of them

fewer meet with a reasonable measure of success. "The valley of death" is not a figment of poetic imagination. The Path towards the Spirit is rugged, at times tortuous, crowded with sombre shadows. Usually when an ardent spirit makes the choice and takes to the culture of an inner life, it is some element in his being that is open to the Light and is responsive to the higher Powers and receives the decisive touches and consummate gifts. But one point of contact or one element alone can not sustain for ever the entire being. The aspiration naturally has to extend and pervade the other regions which are not all equally ready to open to the Divine. They have their own habits, their own magnets, their own inheritances. They cling to their past and do not easily yield to the Higher Influence. As a result, the seeker feels a conflict in his own being, one part pulling this way and another that way. This conflict within himself is particularly strong and pervasive in crucial stages when definitive steps are to be taken.

Inertia and obstruction to change are so strong in Nature that nothing changes without resistance, and changes only when it must. The human mind opposes the enlargement of its boundaries by casting doubts repeatedly —at times very corroding doubts—on the very existence and active will of the Higher Truth. The vital and dynamic part in us, when it sees the very props of its normal activity e.g. desire, greed, ambition, being systematically flattened out, revolts violently or gets so depressed that the whole being seems to be enveloped in the feeling. The innate instincts, the deep-rooted habits of the body go on relentlessly with their own pull and add to the the difficulty. It looks as if happiness and peace were things of the past with no possibility of return, even though one set out in the firm belief that God's rule of Love and Harmony were possible on earth. But this is a passage; the passage should not be mistaken for a perpetual misery, as an unending means. The traveller on this track, if he is sincere, feels the guidance of the Divine Grace, sees the finger-prints in the steady growth of what appears to be quite an unreasonable faith in the Goal, faith that the dark passage cannot last for ever, that one is securely led to the goal by the protecting Hand that set him on the journey. The pilgrim must not halt. If he does, he betrays his own soul which has impelled him to choose this other, more difficult life for the sublime purpose. He must go ahead. To advance, to move towards the needed change is the law of life in the spiritual plane as well, not in the material alone. The unwavering soul is sure to be carried safe by the Grace of the Divine through the instrumentality of that substratum of light within—*Faith.*

But resistance within one's own being is not the only block in the way of the spiritual seeker. Man does not exist all by himself apart from others. He cannot live by his own air. The interdependence of beings is entire and unqualified. There is a continuous interchange between himself and

the rest of the universe, known and unknown to him, and to that extent his progress is conditioned by the environmental influences. Besides, there are larger universal forces at work in the individual as a centre of their action. These cosmic Powers have a great role to play in the inner development of man as he begins to enlarge the ambit of his consciousness. But the cosmos is not a field of helpful Forces alone. The tradition that for every force of Light there is an opposing force of Darkness is not a myth. Forces do operate in the cosmic field obstructing the growth of man towards the Godhead. In the language of the ancient mystics, there is a regular battle between these forces of darkness and evil on the one hand, and those of Light and the Good on the other, which seek to help those who invoke their aid. But the undivine forces cannot last for ever as they have no right and strength and support of truth in them for their sustenance. The spiritual warrior opposes and has to oppose the onslaughts of these forces initially by his own strength based on the solid Faith in the Grace of the Guide. Progressively his will and spiritual fibre get toned up with each trial of strength, and his endeavours are ultimately crowned with success by the directing hand of the Divine who is ever-watchful and answers to the needs of the hour. This, then, is the assurance, the assurance of victory, the assurance of light that is vouchsafed to us in the clarion call of the Divine Mother.

M. P. PANDIT

JIVANMUKTA AND THE SUPERMAN

(REPLY TO A LETTER)

IT is necessary, at the outset, to state in precise terms what we mean by Jivanmukta or the supramental man. For when we grasp the fundamentals of the two ideals, the difference between them will not be difficult to see; also, there will be no room for underestimate of the one or overstatement of the other.

A statement is made in the letter that a being "akin to an animal can by dint of its own exertions obtain the mind of man and move about in the world like a human being. Similar is the case of a man becoming a Jivanmukta." "In Superman the race is evolved into a higher species to receive the supramental light and lead a Divine life... By the descent of the supermind an urge is created to form a higher species..."

The analogy in regard to Jivanmukta is not apt. Neither an animal akin to man can get endowed with a human mind, nor a man akin to an animal can by his personal effort become a Jivanmukta. Again, it is necessary to be cautious in using certain expressions of Sri Aurobindo in regard to the supramental man. When we speak of the supramental type, greater caution is necessary for a true grasp of the basic principles of the Yoga that Sri Aurobindo adopts for the realisation of the Truth of the Superman as envisaged by him. And it is absolutely essential to note that the terms he uses have special significances and their connotations could be easily missed by any one who is not familiar with the fundamentals of his teachings. Superman, Supermind, Descent, Divine life, Transformation, even the word Aspiration, each one of these—and many more are there—has a definite meaning and does not convey the same sense as is intended in common parlance or by others following a different teaching.

Let us first state how Jivanmukti is not a simple and easy matter or an attainment that can be won by personal exertion alone. Nor is it possible for any one who is not sufficiently developed to make his approach to this endeavour. We shall look at the question of Jivanmukti in its practical aspect, and leave aside the various points of view from which it is looked at by the dialectical Vedantin. For there are certain schools of Vedantic thought which do not admit of the fact that Mukti is possible at all for man while on earth, though Truth-consciousness of a sort, they admit, is possible for one to arrive at in the embodied existence on earth. We shall therefore avoid these and other controversial views and look at this state as described in the authentic utterances of saints and seers which are supported by the scriptures such as the Upanishads or the Gita. We shall proceed on the basis that Jivanmukti is the state of one's liberation from the bonds of ignorance while breathing on earth. We recognise the fact that it is the supreme possible condition of the embodied soul in which wisdom reigns and dispels doubts, and action is no bondage. It is a state of consciousness liberated from Nature's control in which the soul sees all existence as the One in which it is centred and realises its own identity with it. The Gita's description of the state of Brahmic consciousness and of the life of one who has attained it, in the II chapter and elsewhere, notably in the V chapter, gives us a clear idea of what it means by liberation. When it uses the term *Sada Mukta*, always liberated, and couples it with its reference to *Samadhi* as an effortless normal state of consciousness of the true sage, the fact is affirmed beyond doubt that the Brahmic realisation and Jivanmukti are not two different things. We may add that 'realisation' refers to the spiritual and psychological being of man while 'Jivanmukti' points to the living embodiment of the same. Various descriptions of Mukti are given in the scriptures. Though they are apparently different, they will be found to be not contradictory at all, but

are so mentioned viewing the state of a Jivanmukta in various aspects. In one of the earliest Upanishads we find it stated that one who has realised Brahman does not feel that he is in the body, much less look upon himself as the body, just as a serpent does not look upon its cast-off slough as itself. Bodiless, he is still the spirit in the embodied life. Obviously, this is spoken of Jivanmukta in relation to the bodily existence. There are other statements made of one who has realised the Brahman, as related to his psycho-physical set-up in life. When they speak of the unfastening of the knots of ignorance in the deeper and radical parts of the being, especially the knot of the ego in the heart, *hridaya granthi*, the statement is made at once in terms of the psycho-physical and spiritual elements of the being. In the later Upanishads we find quite often a general description of the life of Jivanmukta in his relation to the world-environment. All these statements are true in their proper perspective. But what we are concerned with here is the central realisation of the liberated man, the Jivanmukta. All these true realisations of those who live liberated from the imprisoning round of ego-bound mental and vital activities are essentially one, because Brahman, the ultimate Reality, is one and the same everywhere. But the points of initial contact and the lines of approach differ widely with the temperament and competence of the individual. Consequently, their expressions and methods are variously formulated so much so that we find them laying stress on one element to the exclusion of others. Thus we find diverse types of Jivanmuktas. If the type is of an excessively metaphysical bent or the intensity of the realisation has grown out of an abnormal disgust for the environment or if the type is chosen for stressing the static and immobile aspect of Brahman or if that is the mood and occasion, then we may very well expect to hear that all is the One Brahman, the Atman alone is real, eternally free; there is none really bound, therefore there is none to be really freed. There is, in fact, an oft-quoted verse which represents this view. "There is no bondage, no birth, none is bound, none freed, no *sadhaka*, there is none to desire liberation, none is liberated; this is the highest truth." But there is elsewhere in some Vedantic treatises fine description also of a Jivanmukta which agrees with that given in the Gita and the authentic utterances of other saints. But if he is of a different type, say devotional, he sees Brahman as the Divine Being in all and embraces him in love and delight; if of a dynamic turn he moves about yoked to the Divine in will and works. Or he can be a soul chosen for a special manifestation in which case he may not have a particular personal inclination to follow a path to reach the goal of Brahmic Realisation; but the revelation is thrust upon him, suddenly as it were, and thus freed alive from the bodily and mental bondage he does not get entangled in the meshes of ignorance, nor yields to the lure of diversity. He is well aware of the divergent ways, divisions and separative movements to which others living

in ignorance are subjected. His own life on earth is guided by the Supreme Lord of all, by the Supreme Self of all selves. He is one with the All-controlling, free, eternal Consciousness; he is an open secret, an effulgent centre for the manifestation of the Supreme Reality, God or the Self.

We have instanced these types to draw pointed attention to the fact that while the experience of unity and the realisation of Brahman or God, the Omnipresent One may be common to all Jivanmuktas, their behaviour in life, their thoughts and language and the formulations of method, and if they happen to be thinkers, their constructions of philosophical systems, vary very largely and quite often. But whatever may be the presentation of their ideals, they are fundamentally based on realisations of no mean order, and at their best they are the supremest possible for man while he still lives on earth. Is such an attainment possible for a man akin to an animal? The teachings of all great men give an emphatic reply in the negative. That it is possible only for a highly developed soul is affirmed in the Gita when it proclaims in its characteristic way that out of a thousand who make the attempt, hardly more than one succeeds. We may note also what Sri Krishna says: "At the close of a series of births, the man of knowledge takes refuge in me." Nor is such an exalted state reached by any one through personal exertion alone. However straightforward, enlightened and one-pointed may be the efforts made by the seeker, the ultimate result is not worked out by the ego-bound mentality of the man—the fruit of all the human labours in the line comes from outside the personal range. It is always the Guru's guidance or God's grace that ensures success, the *siddhi*, the realisation of the ideal aimed at. The Grace, the guiding light may accompany the endeavours of the Sadhaka from the very beginning quite openly in some cases, but covertly in many instances until the hour of consummation arrives when the Jivanmukta sees that it is the hand of the Guide, the Grace of God that was all along preparing the soul for reaching the goal. All teachings, either of the ancient scriptures or of master mystics of later times, go to show that personal exertion, though usually a necessary condition for preparing the human being for spiritual realisation, cannot bear fruit without the finishing touch for consummation favoured by the Higher Power which may act through a human Guru or may be directly the Divine Grace itself.

This much we have had to state by way of caution in order to avoid an understatement of the status of a Jivanmukta in spiritual life. Before we proceed to consider the question of the supramental man, we shall state this much: the attainment of Jivanmukti is not an easy matter. It is not possible through personal effort alone. It is the highest achievement so far made possible for man. There are many types of Jivanmukti, even as there are many types of men. They may be all centred in the basic unity of Pure Existence or Divine World-Existence, still the tendency and out-

look often vary. One may look on the world with indifference and be inclined to a negative attitude; another may take a positive view with a sense and feeling of equality spread around in the environs, allowing the realisation of the Brahmic presence in the All to take an active turn. Similar variations in the expressions of the soul and nature of such realised beings can be gathered from authoritative utterances and lives of men in the past or present.

But when we turn from the ideal of Jivanmukti to the question of "Superman" as envisaged in this teaching, a new vista opens before us, the problem of personal liberation makes way for that of man's place and value in the Cosmic scheme, a world-outlook absorbs or takes the place of the ego-centric attitude to life. The main question is not how to get out of the cycle of birth and death, *samsara*, to get liberated from the bonds of ignorance and to realise the supreme Truth here in embodied life, though this too finds its place in the solution of the problem as we envisage it. The problem concerns the Earth-existence, the Earth-life, the Earth-spirit or the Earth-consciousness and therefore is related to man also in as much as he is a product, part and parcel of the Earth-consciousness, Earth-life, Earth-matter, in short, of all that the Earth-being is. We can present in a few lines without entering into the metaphysical aspect of the whole question, the position of this creation of which the earth is indeed a part, but a part which is of immediate importance to us for the obvious reason that we come of and are in it. We proceed on the Vedantic basis that All is Brahman, the One Eternal Sat-chid-ananda which is omnipresent. Whatever the process of creation be or the condition antecedent to it, we do not find anything here as ever-blissful, perfect, full of knowledge. But Brahman does not exclude this existence which is pierced through with darkness and ignorance and struggle and suffering. And this state of affairs in the Earth-life cannot be co-existent with Brahman, the All-existence and for all time; for the latter is Sat-chid-ananda and Eternity. We take it then that this state of our existence is not what this creation is intended to become ultimately; it is still in the making, imperfect because the intended goal is not yet arrived at. The suffering and darkness on earth are temporary and local in the immensity of the oceanic existence which is Divine. We look upon man as this Earth's product at its highest, and the Earth Spirit itself is the Creative Spirit plunged into the creation with all its potentialities latent and locked in its womb for gradual release in time and in suitable forms under earth-conditions. This opening up of the imprisoned forces of life and light from the body of the Earth enclosure, this outflowering of the organic elements that constitute the living and the thinking creature from the inorganic matter of the living Earth is effected by an urge within the Earth-spirit itself on one side, and on the other by a pressure of the

powers of light and life from the plenary home of the creative Godhead presiding over the creation. This gradual release is generally called evolution and that is effected by the double movement of a descent of Knowledge and Power from above and outside of the Earth and of what we call an ascent from within upwards of the Earth-consciousness. This ascent is an urge, or more correctly a resultant movement of the urge.

What is the character of this urge? What also is the meaning of the Descent? In our view of the Earth-existence, it is the Godhead of the Cosmos, it must be noted, that sends down force-currents of strength and life and rays of light that are absorbed by the Earth-spirit in her inconscient body of matter, in the subconscient frame of her life, in the self-conscious soul of her Spirit. And because this Earth-spirit is something of the Divine that has entered into the Earth with all its potentials, there is an incessant urge within the Earth to bring out what are latent in it—to evolve the unearthy elements involved in it, retaining always the earth-base and earth-form with necessary changes in the formations of the evolutionary being out of herself. She has evolved life in the plant, and mind in man and has produced suitable physical froms for their sustenance. Mind is not the last term of her growth, hence the urge to evolve a still higher principle. She can succeed only when she receives greater and definite help from the Godhead, the Divine above in the form of a substantial intervention, bringing pressure upon the Earth-consciousness to give way for the peace, power, light and the rest that are the characteristic accompaniment of the higher Divine principle that is to be organised in Earth-life. This higher principle is immediately and directly Divine in its nature and functioning; it is spiritual, higher than the mind which is the highest principle that has been so far organised for functioning on earth. We may state, then, that all the evolutionary labour of the Earth-spirit is directed towards the manifestation of this Divine principle, called the Supermind, on earth. But the success of the effort, the consummation is brought about by the helping hand of the Divine above, by what we call the descent of the delegated central light and strength of the Divine to answer to the Earth's call.

We can now see that the evolutionary urge and the ascending movement of the Earth-consciousness do not and cannot take place in the inert matter or subconscious life of the earth, but can only in her most highly evolved units of life and mind, centres of self-conscious existence, what we call the human being. In man therefore this urge and call for the Higher Light takes the form of aspiration—say a consuming passion—and the Divine above descends in response to the cry and call from below.

Now that we have briefly dealt with the meaning of "the Divine descent and the urge", the implications will be clear especially with reference to the *sadhana* and the status of a Jivanmukta in this scheme. The *sadhana* proceeds

on the basis that there is a Divine Being guiding from above and supporting from below the spiritual evolution on earth; it is in the nature of things that at this highly advanced stage of evolution of the human mind the superior Divine principle of supermind could be established. Man has to make way for its entry and sway so that the Divine can change and rearrange the parts of his being in such a way that he can be a centre of the higher consciousness and live the life of the Spirit. The double movement of the *sadhana*—referred to in the letter as 'urge' and 'descent'—is distinctive and special to this path which consists in the aspiration and call from the human being and response of the Divine Grace and the Divine descent. Every urge for God is not this aspiration and every gracious response from the Divine is not this descent. There is a parallel double movement of ascent and descent (*arohana* and *avarohana*) in the Tantric Yoga which should not be confounded with this one, for the simple reason that the aims and methods and the Truth envisaged are different. Here primarily the problem is related to the Earth-consciousness and not the ego-centric individual, though he has an important part to take in its evolution. The solution is in the hands of the Divine who has sanctioned the formation of this existence and, in a sense, created the problem thereof. Therefore in working out the solution which is the establishment of of supreme Divine principle of knowledge and strength and action on Earth, the choice naturally falls on man as he is at the crest of the Earth-consciousness in the evolutionary march. But the actual work of the *sadhana* is prompted and carried out by the Divine, by his Power, the Shakti while the human being is the instrument chosen to receive, hold and transmit to those around this Divine gift.

From this it would be clear that this *sadhana* can be given only by the Supramental Divine in and through the special human vehicle moulded by himself for this manifestation on Earth, accepting at first the limitations and conditions of earth-life in order to change it ultimately. It cannot be taken and done by any one who is not open to or does not prepare himself to accept the Truth about the progressive self-unfoldment of the Divine in the human being. It is not necessary to speak of the result expected of the workings of the *sadhana* of this Yoga force. Transformation—this one word connotes all the changes and right orderings of the various elements that constitute our individual being. Here again this change must not be confounded with the change that takes place in some of the traditional Yoga-sadhanas that have been in vogue in our country for ages. For the aim here is not to achieve a certain spiritual fulfilment, or develop and acquire powers, *siddhis*, or to discipline the material body and keep it so much under control that it might become immune to disease and decay, though these also come of their own accord, find their true place as the *sadhana* progresses. As for Jivanmukti, the realisation is of course indis-

pensable and must be there before the final transformation is possible at all. But transformation is a process, progressive and does not wait for the supreme realisation whether it is a realisation of the deepest Self within us, or the Self beyond and above or the Self or Brahman everywhere. The realisation, let us call it *mukti*, release or liberation of consciousness from the bonds of ignorance can come earlier in some cases, but the work of transformation continues until the finished product of the supramental type by the direct descent of the Divine crowns the evolutionary labour with success.

This much for the present. What has been stated, necessarily in brief here, is sufficient to throw light on the significance of the terms employed in this teaching—especially Descent, Transformation, Aspiration—corresponding to the "urge" mentioned in the letter, the advent of a higher, the supramental type which is referred to as "evolving into a higher species". Then, the question of contrast of *Jivanmukti* with the supramental *siddhi* does not arise. For the former has its place and value in this Yogic endeavour, and this has been already stated. Before closing, it is necessary to draw attention to one central fact. This *Sadhana* aims at the heights, yet proceeds from the depths; there is a wide vision of men and things and the world-existence as the strides of the *Sadhana* take the Sadhaka to larger and larger spheres; even before he has progressed far in the path vaster vistas open before him; many elements of other Yogas enter into the framework of this Yogic construction. This *Sadhana* proceeds by a comprehensive survey, takes into fuller account the value and place of the ego-freed soul, i.e., the soul of the embodied being in release, *mukti*, and effects the liberation of the consciousness from the control of the lower nature at some suitable step of the Yogic ladder according to the nature and needs and readiness of the disciple.

T. V. Kapali Sastry

NEW LIGHTS ON YOGA

THE LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

TODAY wherever one turns, one finds chaos. Everywhere there is darkness and despair. Truth seems to have temporarily receded in the background, and Falsehood reigns supreme. This is indeed a very dark period for humanity, perhaps the darkest in its history. At such a time to receive a book from Sri Aurobindo, the renowned author of "The Life Divine" and "Essays on the Gita," is to receive a message of hope, a message that comes like a ray of light illumining the darkness which envelops the world. We are offered by the Sri Aurobindo Circle a book of "Letters" written by Sri Aurobindo to his disciples in reply to their questions on matters both spiritual and philosophical. These letters should help to clear a lot of confused thinking on spirituality and yoga, and should contribute towards giving a better understanding of these matters not only to those who associate spirituality with seances, table-thumping and short talks with dead relatives, but also to those who associate yoga with growing long beards and dozing under banyan-trees. These letters also give the lie to the illusion that action is measured by the number of physical movements executed per hour in giving radio-talks and making quick aeroplane flights. Action can only be measured if the energy that is put forth can be measured, if the truth behind its workings and the end for which it is put forth can be known; but there is no one who can measure the spiritual force that Sri Aurobindo puts forth daily in order to mould the earth into its divine equivalent.

Socrates says that if one desires to learn shoe-making one whould go to a shoe-maker and not to a horse-dealer, and if one wants to learn carpentry, one should go to a carpenter and surely not to a butcher; so too, we can say that if one wants to learn about spiritual matters, one should go to a person who is himself a great spiritual figure and who can also give a rationale, an intellectual exposition of his spiritual realisations and not to a utilitarian economist or a professor of mathematics. Of course, the Ultimate Reality can only be known through spiritual experience, It being a truth of Being and Consciousness and not a truth of the mind, a mental concept; but for those of us who are still loitering in the lower hemisphere, a clear, precise and illuminating intellectual statement should go far in clearing doubts and forming a strong mental conviction that there is a Truth which can be attained on this earth and not in some distant heaven, and that the attainment of this Truth would transform and divinise human existence,

We have not far to seek for such a figure; we have only to turn to Sri Aurobindo, who has by now given us a series of books on spirituality and yoga, the latest being this book of letters. Emerson says that the tone of seeking is one, the tone of having is another; there are those who seek to know and those who really know. The latter "Speak from within, from experience, as possessors of the fact, the former from without, as spectators merely." As one reads these letters, one becomes more and more convinced that, for once at least, one is listening to the voice of *the knower*.

These letters will come as an inspiring message to all those who seek higher values, especially to those who have realised the limitations of mind-power and the impotency of European vitalism to lead man to an integral fulfilment of his whole being, to unite man with man, and man to God. Obviously, there has been an aberration in the growth of man, an exaggerated development of one part of his being at the expense of the other. Man is a soul seeking fulfilment on earth, using mind, life and body as his instruments of self-expression; therefore his soul should be the master of his total personality. But instead of that, the vital, the life principle in him, has thrust back the soul, the divine element in him, and usurped its place and uses mind and body as its instruments, whereas actually it should have been the obedient servant and instrument of the soul. Man proudly asserts that he is a rational being. To a certain extent he is, but to a greater extent he is a mentalised animal with his mind playing second fiddle to his lower vital nature which craves satisfaction of its hankerings and desires both suppressed and unsuppressed. Mostly the mind is busy trying to find justification for the movements of this lower nature; only in rare moments a secret guidance seems to filter through into the outer consciousness but is not allowed to make itself effective and is at once suppressed as something dangerous, which if encouraged, is sure to stand in the way of indulging in these movements. Even those few who have succeeded in controlling their lower nature and are essentially mental find to their great disappointment that mind-power by itself is not potent enough to combat the powers of Falsehood and Ignorance which at present hold sway over humanity.

In order to set right this aberration from his true growth, man has to gather and draw in his out-going energies, tear himself away from his old obscure moorings and loosen the grip of the subconscious, and change his centre of consciousness from the outer mental-vital-physical to the inner soul. A moral code drawn up according to a Tolstoyian formula or for that matter any other formula cannot be a solution. The solution lies in bringing the soul forward and allowing it to lead the evolution of the total personality. All these things become more and more clear and come home to us with a strong impact as we read these letters.

A reviewer of "The Life Divine" has written that Sri Aurobindo writes like a man who is standing among the stars. Whilst appreciating the appropriateness of the remark, one must not lose sight of the fact that though Sri Aurobindo has his head among the stars, he has an extremely firm foothold on the earth. This has to be so in the nature of things because his work in the cosmic field is to transform and divinise the earth-consciousness, the whole of terrestrial existence by the power of the Supramental Force. The aim of his Yoga of Transformation is not only to rise from the dark and ignorant earth-consciousness into the luminous all-knowing Divine Supramental Truth-Consciousness, but also to bring down the Light and Power of that Truth-Consciousness into mind, life and even body and radically transform them, thus uplifting the human into the Divine and manifesting and embodying the Divine in the human.

This implies that man will not remain for long as he is at present, but by attaining a Divine Consciousness will evolve into a higher type of being, what Sri Aurobindo calls the Gnostic being. In one of the letters, "The Yoga of Transformation" he writes, ".....the object sought after is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here, a cosmic, not solely a supra-cosmic achievement. The thing to be gained also is the bringing in of a Power of consciousness (the Supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active." In order to understand this more clearly, let us refer to another letter where he describes the Supramental. "I mean by the Supramental the Truth-Consciousness whether above or in the universe by which the Divine knows not only his own essence and being but his manifestation also. Its fundamental character is knowledge by identity, by that the Self is known, the Divine Sachchidananda is known, but also the Truth of manifestation is known because this too is That—*sarvam khalvidam brahma*, *vasudevah sarvam*, etc. Mind is an instrument of the Ignorance trying to know—Supermind is the Knower possessing knowledge, because one with it and the known, therefore seeing all things in the light of His own Truth, the light of their true self which is He. It is a dynamic and not a static Power, not only a Knowledge, but a Will according to Knowledge—there is a Supramental Power or Shakti which can manifest direct its world of Light and Truth in which all is luminously based on the harmony and unity of the One, not disturbed by a veil of Ignorance or any disguise."

It is for this reason that in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga of Transformation human values are not entirely discarded but are removed of their dross and uplifted into their divine equivalents.

The book is divided into eight parts beginning with an admirably written foreword by K.H.G. in which we are clearly shown Sri Aurobindo's attitude towards Life and Spirit, the human and the Divine. The letters are so well linked together that they read like the successive chapters of a book. The subjects covered include Spiritual Metaphysics and Psychology, the Supernatural and the Occult, and the principle and process of the Yoga of Transformation, besides other miscellaneous subjects like Art and Science.

In Part I, Sri Aurobindo discusses evolution from its obscure beginnings in Matter to its luminous consummation in the Supermind and proceeds to explain the difference between spiritualisation and supramentalisation. In Part II, he shows the inadequacy of the illusionistic interpretation of the cosmic movement, put forward by Shankara. This theory has behind it, no doubt, a spiritual experience but it is an experience that is rigidly limited to only one part of a Reality that has many aspects, a Reality that cannot be restricted to a single poise. It is not an integral experience in which the truth of the static as well as the dynamic aspects of the Divine, and consequently of both Being and Becoming is apprehended.

The one Supreme Reality is the Divine who is infinite Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss, Supermind. The universe is a manifestation of this Reality and therefore real. Its reality may be derivative in the sense that it exists only in and because of this Reality, but that does not make it an illusion imposed upon an undifferentiated, impersonal, pure Existence, for whatsoever is implicit, inherent and essential in pure Existence is worked out in the manifestation amidst a complex play of forces and under conditions of time and space.

According to Sri Aurobindo, evolution is not merely a biological process as is commonly understood but a spiritual process. Spirit and Matter are not two contraries permanently opposed to each other but are in their essence two poles of the same Reality.

The one Reality has descended from its status of pure Existence into cosmic manifestation by the action of its own Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative dynamism of the all-knowing Supermind. In its descent it has created a graded hierarchy of worlds and planes of existence by a movement of self-limitation which finds its culmination in the Inconscient where it is utterly locked in a dark trance of self-involution and self-absorption. All the principles Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss, Supermind, Mind, Life and Matter are involved in the Inconscient and one after another emerge owing to the urge in themselves for manifestation and to a pressure exerted on them from their corresponding planes which have been created in the descent. This is the ascending evolutionary movement in which first Matter emerges, then Life and then

Mind. At present we have an organised mental-vital-physical existence; now the next involved principle, Supermind, has to emerge in response to a pressure from its own plane and organise itself here as an operative power.

Looking at Reality from another angle we can say that the one Transcendent Reality has diffused itself as the universe in infinite space and time and in this diffusion has created a self-conscious centre of itself, the individual, which evolves and carries the whole of terrestrial existence to its divine fulfilment in the Supramental.

So we see that the whole of creation, rather manifestation, is an ascending and descending involutionary-evolutionary movement in which all that is involved in Spirit evolves downward to Matter and all that is involved in Matter evolves upwards to Spirit. Hence, the idea of Spirit and Matter, Being and Becoming, the Divine and the World being irreconcilable opposites is erroneous.

After reading the first two Parts one feels that the last word on the Ultimate Reality was not uttered by Shankara. Here, one is confronted with a more comprehensive survey of Reality, a firmer grasp over all its aspects, a more intimate oneness with the source of all that is. All the highest spiritual realisations of the greatest mystics and yogis of history find their truth and right relation in the all-comprehending, all-embracing, integral and pleromatic realisation of Sri Aurobindo—the supramental realisation.

In Part III, the central aim and process of the Yoga of Transformation and the three aspects of the Divine are explained. The Divine is, firstly, the Cosmic Self who permeates and supports from behind all things in the manifestation and holds them in the vastness of his own being. He is also the Indweller who lives in the inmost heart of all beings whom the disciple must learn to serve and obey and to whom he must consecrate all works. Thirdly, he is the Transcendent Being towards whom the disciple must rise and whose Light, Power and Bliss he must bring down into his consciousness.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is the fourth one—"The Parts of Total Consciousness." It gives one a psychological insight into the working of the various parts of man's total personality, and should prove of great help not only to those who have taken the spiritual path but also to those who have a purely intellectual interest in psychology.

In spite of the hectic extravert activities all over the world today, a need is felt among serious-minded people to probe into the inner depths of their being and to correlate and co-ordinate its various parts into a perfect and harmonious integration. In the hope of finding a solution which will lead them to such an integration they look up to the West. But Western psychology is an infant science and its limitations are obvious. It has succeeded in collecting a mass of useful data within a short time, but this collection has been too hastily strung into theories. Even the collection itself is

insufficient and the field from which it has been made is extremely narrow. Its investigation is restricted to only a part of man's nature, and that too, the darkest, most obscure and turbid part, the lower-vital subconscious layer of his total consciousness. The truth behind each system of psychology is partial and one-sided and yet an attempt is made to explain the whole of man's nature in the light of this partial truth.

It is only by piercing the veil that lies between the outer surface-consciousness and the inner ranges, and going deep within and high above as is done by trained yogis and mystics, that one can learn the true nature of man's total personality.

The psychologists believe that men's actions are regulated by certain predominant urges. There is the "power-urge" of Adler, the "sex-urge", the *idée fixe* of Freud, the 'safety-urge', the 'food-urge' and so on. All these urges have their roots in a certain part of man's nature, his vital nature. But this is not all; there are other urges, too, which spring from the pure mind and the soul. There is in man an urge to seek higher values, the absolutes of Truth, Good and Beauty without it being a sublimated form of the "power-urge".

Again, there is in him an aspiration to seek God, be one with Him and constantly live in the light of His presence. This urge is the demand of the soul in him for the realisation of the highest Truth and the living of a diviner existence. Man seeks Knowledge, Power, Freedom, Bliss and Immortality because these are akin to his true self, his highest self. The other urges are a distortion and perversion of that one urge.

When modern psychology will recognise the existence of the soul within and the superconscient spiritual ranges above, the nature of the one true urge will be revealed to its gaze—the urge to evolve into a divine being, what Sri Aurobindo calls the Supramental being.

The new school of psychologists, the Parapsychologists headed by Rhine, Soal and others, examines a larger domain of man's nature. They admit the existence of an "Ultra-Marginal Consciousness or a Subliminal Self", a "Subconscious", and a "Supraliminal Consciousness"—a consciousness above the normal consciousness, and are at present carrying on an investigation in the field of mysticism and 'paragnosis' (awareness other than the normal way of knowing).

These parapsychologists are no doubt doing valuable work and are sure to throw more light on the hidden parts of man's total consciousness, but they are in danger of being caught in a maze of occult phenomena and mistaking the supernatural for the truly spiritual when examining the truths of mysticism. The intellect cannot differentiate between the two, it cannot know what lies beyond its horizon; to recognise the difference, an intuitive spiritual knowledge is required.

According to Sri Aurobindo's spiritual vision and experience, Consciousness is the fundamental fact of the universe. Consciousness need not necessarily be mental, as is commonly supposed; it has other ranges too. It formulates itself as a physical, a vital, a mental consciousness, but in man all these are heterogeneously mixed together in the waking surface-consciousness and held together by the centralising and individualising knot of the ego. When one goes behind the veil of the surface-consciousness, one finds the true status of these gradations of Consciousness—an inner mental, an inner vital and an inner physical consciousness, each opening itself to Universal Mind, Universal Life and Universal Matter respectively. These are the ranges of the Subliminal Self. This Subliminal Self is also open to the superconscient planes above as well as the subconscient depths below.

If one goes still deeper into the recesses of one's being, one finds one's true soul. It is the spark of the Divine projected into the manifestation to support the earth evolution. It is at first an undifferentiated and unformulated power of the Divine Consciousness, but as it evolves it develops a soul-personality of itself, the psychic being or *chaitya purusha* which evolves from birth to birth, supports mind, life and body, uses them as its instruments of self-expression, and grows by their experience. It is hidden in man behind the surface-consciousness and secretly exerts its influence on the outer being; in order that the entire personality may be turned towards the Divine, as is essential in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga of Transformation, the psychic being has to come forward and become the central guiding light of the whole being.

Below the level of our waking consciousness there is a submerged lower-down consciousness, a consciousness which is utterly dark, obscure, incoherent and inarticulate—the Subconscient. This layer of consciousness is localised between the outer surface consciousness and the inconscient abysses of our being. It is a sub-mental consciousness having an obscure mind with its mechanically repetitive thoughts, an obscure vital full of suppressed desires and cravings, and an obscure physical throwing up automatic reactions, and conditioning the state of the body to a very great extent.

Above the mental there are the Superconscient spiritual gradations of Consciousness. These are the Gnostic ranges which reach their acme in the Supramental Truth-Consciousness.

All these spiritual and psychological truths are discussed at length in Part IV.

In Part V, the author deals with visions, experiences and realisations and shows their true place and value in the Yoga of Transformation.

In Part VI, we have some interesting letters on vital love and psychic

love; and in Part VII, a number of instructive letters on the difficulties that lie in the path of Yoga and their solution, which are sure to prove of great help to all those who follow the spiritual path.

The book ends with Part VIII, which contains letters on miscellaneous subjects like Reasoning and Yogic Experience, Beauty, Art, etc. The third letter in this group is on Krishna Consciousness, which should prove illuminating to those who consider a belief in the historicity of Sri Krishna a superstition entertained by the ignorant.

This book of letters definitely occupies an important place in the scheme of Aurobindonian literature, and is worthy to stand beside "The Life Divine" and "The Essays on the Gita".

S. R. ALBLESS

AN APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF *ESSAYS ON THE GITA*

"I LOOKED at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell, but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me His shade." Thus spoke Sri Aurobindo after his acquittal in the Alipore Conspiracy Case of 1908. And he continued, "I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door, and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or, I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arm of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover." This was the vision of the world-spirit, *Visvarupadarsan*, the vision that reconciles and unifies the One in the many and the Many in the One—a vision vouchsafed to Sri Aurobindo during the period of his incarceration in the solitary cell in the Alipore jail. As he himself says in the Uttarapara speech, the Divine really took him away from the coils of worldly work in politics to which he seemed inextricably bound, so that in the period of seclusion and quiet in the jail, he might be trained in closer spiritual communion with Him so that, exceeding the ordinary limitations of man, he might grow into like nature and law of being with the Supreme Divine (*sadharmyam agatah*), and be reshaped into an instrument fit to do His works in the world. Therefore in the early days of jail-life he was brought into contact with the Bhagavat Gita and Sri Krishna's strength entered into him, and he was able to do the *sadhana* of the Gita. He was not only to understand intellectually but, it may well be emphasised here, to realise

what Sri Krishna demanded of Arjuna. Brought up in England amongst foreign ideas and in foreign atmosphere, he was, to start with, an agnostic, a sceptic, or even, as he confesses, an atheist. All this was, of course, radically and fundamentally changed at once, and he was transformed in the effulgence of the divine Presence. Day after day, for one whole year, the Godhead appeared before him and showed him His wonders, and made him realise the utter truths of the Gita, the Vedas and the Eternal Religion —the truths perfected through the Rishis, the saints and the Avatars. "They became living experiences to me", affirms Sri Aurobindo, "and things were opened to me, which no material science could explain." Sri Aurobindo was, thus, chosen as God's Vibhuti to proclaim the immortal Word afresh and to re-illumine the Ancient Path.

If we approach the *Essays on the Gita* by Sri Aurobindo in the light of these facts, we at once realise the greatness, the importance and the authoritativeness of the book. It ceases to be a mere commentary, it becomes a scripture. Numerous authors have dealt with the Gita, and the Gita-literature is really voluminous. The inspiration of the Gita, in the course of ages, has brought forth hundreds of commentaries, translations, essays, sketches, notes and poems, of varying levels and of different view-points. But none except Sri Aurobindo can claim that he penned his work on the Gita in the light of Revelation, and that too a revelation from the divine Author of the Gita Himself. This, the highest secret, the imperishable Yoga was, as we learn from the Gita, first revealed to Vivasvan, the Sun-God, the luminous master of Truth, and Vivasvan taught it to Manu, the progenitor of the human race. But it was lost in the great lapse of time, or in other words, it was withdrawn from movement into quiescence by the Supreme Guru Himself, but this ancient and original Yoga was once again released and given on the terrible battlefield of Kurukshetra by Sri Krishna to Arjuna, the human friend and devotee of the Avatar. This same divine *aisvarya* Yoga is now given by Sri Krishna to Sri Aurobindo, the friend and lover, on the eve of the monstrous carnage of the First World War. This in short, we may say, is what happened in the Alipore jail. No human being except Sri Aurobindo could possibly repeat what Arjuna said to the divine Teacher, *Svayam chaiva bravisi me*, "Thou thyself sayest it to me." In the case of both, the Truth came as direct revelation. The blazing lamp of illumination was lighted in both by the same Ineffable Light. Herein lies the transcendental power of the *Essays on the Gita*, and the secret of the *mantric sakti* which grips the psyche. The attuned reader, who lets the words and phrases in the book sink into his heart, feels the vibrating inner vitality and the throb of the indwelling spirit. It is the calm assurance of the successful Yogi and inspired seer that pervades the book. When Sri Aurobindo began to write the monthly series of Essays from 1914 and

finished them in 1920, he had long since ceased to be a philosophical intellectual and had become a truth-seer, *tattvadarsi*. The work is undoubtedly much more than an intellectual or metaphysical treatise or edifice in whose capacious halls even the scholar can move about or live for years; it is in fact, a truth-structure of Himalayan elevation and you can climb from truth to truth till, if you are fit, you can reach the highest peak of indescribable Light. Some of the great Acharyas who wrote their commentaries on the Gita earlier might have had superior claims to a profounder scholarship in Sanskrit philosophy and learning, but they could not claim either his catholic and world-embracing culture or his Yogic vision and spiritual realisation. The power, the wideness and the light that pervade the *Essays* therefore arise from the unique fact that it was the Divine Guru Himself who revealed the Teachings and inspired the writer.

The writer is no less unique. In him the two cultures of the East and the West meet and harmonise. Even from his infancy he was sent to England and his capacious intellect drank deep in the civilisation and culture of the medieval and modern Europe. The agnostic and sceptic who returned to the mother country was, in spite of himself, called in due time to his destiny, and he plunged deep into the immortal Waters of the ancient spirit of the East and regained and revivified his true soul. Just as Arjuna can be deemed to be the representative man of his age, an outstanding figure in the midst of his contemporaries, Sri Aurobindo can be deemed to be a representative man of this age. Arjuna was a Vibhuti, and Sri Krishna directly initiated Arjuna to the truth and the light, so that he might become the decisive instrument in the struggle for the establishment of *dharma-rajya*, the kingdom of the Right and the Truth. The world is now in need of the re-establishment of the selfsame Right and Truth, and therefore in the solitary cell of the Alipore jail was chosen the Vibhuti of our age charged with the mission of working out the hidden Will so as to bring down the kingdom of Heaven on earth.

The biographer of Sri Aurobindo has remarked that the Gita had been commented upon so frequently, so voluminously, from so many points of view that it was astonishing that Sri Aurobindo should have nevertheless succeeded in making his thousand-page treatise not a whit superfluous, not a whit second-hand, or disagreeably obvious, but rather a radiant re-evocation of the *philosophia perennis* embodied in the Lord's Song (Srinivasa Iyengar: Sri Aurobindo, p.300) and has rightly suggested that the seer-poet and philosopher-Yogin can alone do this. One may add that the Vibhuti illumined by direct revelation can alone work the miracle.

E. GOVINDAN NAIR

REVIEWS

The Russian Idea. *By Nicholas Berdyaev.* Bles. 18s.
Inside U. S. A. *By John Gunther.* Hamish Hamilton. 21s.

The epoch-making splitting of the nucleus of the atom has since been spreading to other spheres. Indivisible India has been split into two; Palestine is going to repeat the same phenomenon on a smaller scale; Europe is virtually split into two parts and so is China; and the whole of humanity is wellnigh on the way to being split into two blocs or systems, the Russian and the American. *Diti* seems to be prevailing everywhere over *Aditi.* Where is this process leading to? Unless it can be stopped and some healing process found, the whole of the human race may meet the fate of Hiroshima. The other day the British House of Commons expressed grave anxiety over the results of the world being divided on ideological lines. Ideas and ideals are great forces and unless the conflict is solved, the future of mankind is indeed gloomy.

The ideological conflict that has acutely manifested itself now had its beginning in the history of Russian thought in the 19th century, and Professor Berdyaev has rendered a great service by delineating it in clear outlines. That thought is of great interest and importance not only because it inspired one of the great creative periods of modern literature but also because it forms the background of the Russian Revolution of 1917. It was once thought that the Bolshevik Revolution was a complete breaking away from the past of Russia; but as Professor Berdyaev shows, that Revolution is indeed only a *moment,* a stage in the evolution of the destiny of Russia which alone explains her history. That destiny, as envisaged by his great master Solovyev, is the realisation of the Kingdom of Heaven on the Earth and the divinisation of humanity. The very title of his book suggests his mystical outlook which is based on Orthodox Christianity. It is paradoxical that the materialistc revolution in Russia is paving the way for the spiritual, but that is a logical consequence of the dialectical movement of history on which Marx himself based his Communistic ideology. It seems to be a big jump from Hegel to Marx, from spirituality to materialism, but history has taken that jump, if indeed it can be so called. Now it is coming round, the two opposites cannot long remain separate but must reconcile themselves in a higher synthesis. That is the true key to the understanding of the ideological conflict that is splitting the world today.

Hegel explained the world as a manifestation out of the Spirit through a dialectical process. But it was not clear how Spirit or Consciousness can turn itself into matter; how God can become the world. So the left-wing followers of Hegel, like Feuerbach, while accepting the dialectical process, regarded the spirit as the end and not the beginning of the process—the beginning being inconscient matter. But is this not simply shifting the question? If matter cannot come out of spirit, how can spirit come out of matter? This aspect of the question has not been realised by the materialsts who came in the wake of Feuerbach. The true solution will be found when

it will be realised that the duality of spirit and matter is only apparent, the two are essentially one; spirit has concealed itself in matter and therefore can, and is bound to, evolve out of matter. This again is the key to the solution of the present ideological conflict. We see Russian thought tending towards this solution throughout the 19th century. The conflict between America and Russia, is not simply a conflict between capitalism and socialism, individualism and collectivism, freedom and authority, liberty and equality—all these are there as side currents but the main conflict is between the materialistic and the spiritual views of life. It is again paradoxical that spiritualistic Russia has taken up a materialistic role, while materialistic America has taken up the cause of spiritual values—but that shows how in the course of the terrestrial evolution the two extremes are going to meet. But how is it that the contending parties still fail to see their meeting-ground? The leaders of Russia are intelligent human beings who seek the good of their country as well as that of whole humanity; the same can equally be said of the leaders of America. Why then they fail to see the view-point of each other? The explanation is that human reason is still imperfect and impure and fails to see the truth in its entirety; some see one aspect, others another aspect and their view is determined by many differentiating factors. One of the potent causes of the impurity of the understanding has its source in the understanding itself and consists in an improper action of the will to know. "That will is proper to the understanding, but here again choice and unequal reaching after knowledge clog and distort. They lead to a partiality and attachment which makes the intellect cling to certain ideas and opinions with a more or less obstinate will to ignore the truth in other ideas and opinions, cling to certain fragments of a truth and shy against the admission of other parts which are yet necessary to its fullness, cling to certain predilections of knowledge and repel all knowledge that does not agree with the personal temperament of thought which has been acquired by the past of the thinker."

The two books under review give us sufficient materials to see how the difference in the point of view has arisen between America and Russia. The conflict between the East and the West which underlies the present ideological conflict began with Hegel in the beginning of the 19th century. The Orthodox Church in Russia has made her traditionally community-minded, and Slavophils like Khomyakov imported into the social field the ecclesiastic conception of *Sobornost* (community-mindedness). Hegel's immense influence in Russia was beyond doubt due to the fact that he represented a reaction against the individualism of the Enlightenment, a victory, in M. Berdyaev's words, "of the general over the particular, of the universal over the individual, of society over personality." But in Russia itself there was a reaction against this view and some of her foremost thinkers like Belinisky and Dostovesky tried to find a solution through a synthesis of the two ideals of universalism and individualism. In the Russian argument over Hegel, Belinisky came to occupy the centre place. In his article on Gribodoev he exclaimed that "society is always juster and higher than the private person." This is how the Russian mind was prepared for accepting Marxist Communism. But Belinisky himself went to the other extreme afterwards. In his letter to Botkin he declared that "the fate of the subject, of the individual, of the personality is more important than the fate of the

whole world." It was as a disciple of Belinisky that Iva Karamazov said: "I renounce altogether the higher harmony; it is not worth the smallest tear of even one tormented child."

The Russian turn towards materialism came as a reaction against the other-worldly outlook of Orthodox Christianity. It is the ascetic denial which led to its dialectical opposite, materialism, in Russia, as in America the materialist denial has led to a spiritual outlook. It was Belinisky again who prepared the transition from the spiritual view of Hegel to materialism. He was incessantly occupied by the controversy about the interpretation of Hegel, in the course of which he made the transition from the idealism of Hegel to the materialism of Feuerbach. Himself dying in 1848 in his thirty-seventh year, he paved the way for the new generation of the sixties and set the revolutionary movement on a materialistic basis which was not thereafter challenged. But though the Russians placed the community over the individual, they were traditionally anarchists in politics and the State was regarded as an evil in itself. It was Hegel who preached that the State was the embodiment of the common consciousness; the State, according to Hegel, is the realisation of the ethical Idea; it is the spirit of the people made visible. It is this deification of the State, starting from Plato, and modernised by Hegel, which has served as the philosophical basis of Fascism, Nazism and Totalitarianism in general which seems to infect today all governments in the world. Lenin made the Russians accept it by inculcating the theory that as communism develops the State would die away naturally.

Thus we find that many of the outstanding characteristics of the Soviet regime cannot be understood without some study of the background of nineteenth-century Russia. The combination of a rigidly materialistic outlook with a call, widely and fervently accepted, for self-sacrifice in the revolutionary cause; the demand of the liberation of human beings from exploitation through the pursuit of a common good; the demand for a philosophy which embraces politics, society, and art and uses them as the expression of its purpose—all these are the direct legacy to Bolshevism of Russian radical thinkers of the nineteenth century. The rejection of bourgeois democracy, of bourgeois individualism, of bourgeois notions of property links Soviet theory and practice with a long line of Russian thinkers. The Russian messianism of the Slavophils, to raise humanity to a higher status through spirituality, reappears in the form of a messianism of the proletariat. Against all this America has stood up, and this has been possible for her as she was a sort of transplantation of Western Europe across the Atlantic which enabled her to escape the immense influence of Russian thought and to develop the western European ideals in their comparative purity. We see how all the western European countries, including Britain, have been considerably influenced by Russian collectivism; it is America alone which has become individualistic in a thorough-going manner, thus presenting the conflict clearly before humanity to make the choice. Both America and Russia want to elevate humanity, but while Russia, agreeably to her spiritualistic tradition is looking to the future, America, the materialist, is preoccupied with raising the present standard of life as much as possible. Russia lives on a theory, America prospers in practice, and a vivid picture of the present American way of life and the American atmosphere is given

by Mr. Gunther in his new voluminous book, *Inside U.S.A.* The "American Way" has produced the greatest material achievement known to man. More probably than not these achievements saved the Soviet system and much else between 1942 and 1944. American organized labour refuses to abandon either the publicly controlled private enterprise or the two-party political process. Mr. Gunther tells us of the young and brilliant president of the United Automobile Workers, Mr. Walter Reuther, who worked in Britain and Russia and other lands as a Socialist, and who now, together with more than 90 per cent of American organized labour, having seen or read of the material achievements of other lands and other systems, plumps heavily for "the gods of Things as They Are" in America. The Americans are convinced that once the Government gets full responsibility for all basic economic decisions, the traditional American democracy of individual freedoms, choices and mobilities will vanish. They do not want these things, or even only the chance of these things to vanish. At a time when their representatives are being asked to bail out Western Europe with the American taxpayer's and worker's charity, the fruits of his work—Western Europe wherein so many of these individual freedoms have already disappeared and where democracy has come to mean underproduction and an equal participation in increasing impoverishment—who can blame them?

But though America has made a clear case for individual freedom, the democracy of the ballot box still leaves too much power in the hands of the Government to ensure real freedom to the people, and capitalism has its inherent evils leading to gross inequality and exploitation, defects which cannot be radically cured simply by clipping the wings of the capitalist goose and plucking its feathers and taking more of its golden eggs as the American system is doing without killing or starving it. The individual must be given the fullest freedom so that he may develop all his potentialities, and so far all forms of totalitarianism must be banned, but he must be taught not to exploit others for his narrow self-interests; this cannot be done as long as man lives in the ego. The problem and the dilemma can only be solved when man finds the Self within himself which is not his ego but a portion of the Divine in him; established in that Self, the individual will realise his essential identity with others and will not feel his happiness perfect unless his fellow-beings are equally happy.

A. B.

The Way to New Peace. *By Amiya Kumar Sanyal*. Published by N. K. Ray, 34A Telipara Lane, Calcutta.

The full name of this little book is: "The Way to New Peace, with a complete plan of New Happy Deal." There is a certain promise implied in such an ambitious title. Let us see if that promise has been redeemed.

We have read the book with interest. Mr. Sanyal is undoubtedly an earnest and thoughtful writer. The sufferings of this ailing world have moved him deeply, and he has tried his best to diagnose the ailment and to prescribe a remedy. There is something more than the usual sentimental

effusion in this book. The author has set about his work in a scientific spirit and has certainly not spared himself. But the space at his disposal has been too small to permit a thorough analysis, such as is essential for his purpose. Perhaps for the same reason, there is a certain lack of lucidity noticeable in the presentation of his case. Let us take one sentence for consideration: "Human beings are already sufficiently civilised, but they are unhappy because of the thoroughly unhappy institutions of the day." This might mean that the individual man is so far advanced in civilisation that he ought to have been happy, but that he has brought into being certain institutions which prevent him from achieving that happiness. Now, it can be admitted forthwith that the average man is, today, far better equipped intellectually than he was ever before; but can intellectual equipment bring about happiness? Is a clever man necessarily a happy man? Obviously not; the key to the portal that leads to happiness is equality —an inherent peace and calm. It can never be allowed that man today is more contented, more equal-minded than his forbears. All that can be urged with reason is that the individual, or even the small group, is not allowed much scope to be selfish, wicked and violent, at least, not openly. His society and, more so, his State keep him well in hand. In fact, he is no longer aught but a bolt or a screw in the complex machinery of the almighty state. In war, as in peace, this state is run in its own interest. That is to say, neither in the interest of the subject, as he sees it, nor in the interest of humanity in general, as the lover of mankind sees it. Individuals may die in billions, a hundred weaker nations may be crushed out of existence, but everything is, to quote a vulgar phrase, O. K., if the interests of that particular monster of a state is served. Such being the psychology of the modern man, it can be easily understood why there never is a condition of true peace anywhere. The interval between two wars is a period of preparation even more than it is a period of recuperation. Overproduction and dumping of goods without any restraint whatsoever keep the people of an opulent state engaged in peace-time, regardless of the misery that is caused thereby to its own working classes, not to speak of the poorer and weaker countries where the goods are dumped. The "unhappy institution" created by man which is mainly responsible for his own unhappiness is this monstrous heartless state machinery that he has created. Until he eliminates this institution he can never have enduring peace and happiness. He may, if he can, establish a state which will not seek to crush the individual out of existence, which will be a perfectly developed collective life of perfectly developed free individuals. Or he may learn to do without a state altogether, dispense with all need for regimentation and control. He may try, in the meantime, various temporary expedients like a League of Nations or a U. N. O. to ensure international peace and goodwill, but he will never succeed in achieving permanent and universal peace and happiness until he goes deep down into himself and realises the triple principle of "God, Freedom and Unity." Always God first, otherwise Freedom and Unity will have no true meaning.

From a careful perusal of Mr. Sanyal's book we feel sure that he understands this, though somewhat vaguely; but he does not lay that stress on a realisation of the Divine in man's earthly life, individual as well as collective, which alone can lead him to a fulfilment of his true destiny. Unless there is

a radical change in the character of man, unless he gets a truly divine outlook, all attempt at achieving unity is bound ultimately to come to nought. And this radical transformation can only be accomplished by individual Sadhana, a persistent and all-round effort by the individual at raising his consciousness to the level of a higher Consciousness, where all sense of division comes automatically to an end. No superficial attempt, no piecemeal reform, can have a lasting effect.

Mr. Sanyal, too, realises that a radical change in man's outlook on life is essential. Man's ideas on politics, economics, education and even religion, he says, have to be thoroughly overhauled in view of the proposed reconstruction of society. We have no reason to disagree with this. But on what basis is man's many-sided life of today to be reconstructed? Surely, it must be on the basis of the essential oneness of all creation in God. Fraternity is a good beginning, but in order to be able to take the next great step in evolution man must realise the immortal saying—Verily, all this is the Brahman. We have referred above to the triune basis of God, Freedom and Unity, indicated by Sri Aurobindo. Nothing short of that will suffice for any permanent reconstruction of man's earthly life.

On page 41 of his book the author gives a picture of the new order as he visualises it—a new Utopia, where perfect happiness will be assured to every man and woman. The chapter is well worth reading. The ultimate aim is the establishment of a world-state, but in the meantime every country will have a single Bank of National Deposit with many branches called Commodity Banks exercising direct control over all factories,—all post-graduate training will be given on touring ships at state expense,—every adult will be a voter with freedom to choose his (or her) constituency for a minimum period of six years, the constituency being vocational or quasi-vocational, not territorial. These and many other aspects of the proposed plan are set forth and explained by the author. But human nature in the lower consciousness will have to be radically transformed before this new Utopia can have any chance of success. As man is today, his character is like the proverbial dog's tail, crooked by nature. Straighten it as much as you like, it will curl up again. This character has first to be transmuted by the descent of a light from above, before we can launch any Utopia plan.

We would like Mr. Sanyal to enlarge his book and reshape it in the light of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and thus give a true lead to his people.

C. C. DUTT

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